A MEMORIAL
OF
ALBERT GALLATIN PALMER, D.D.

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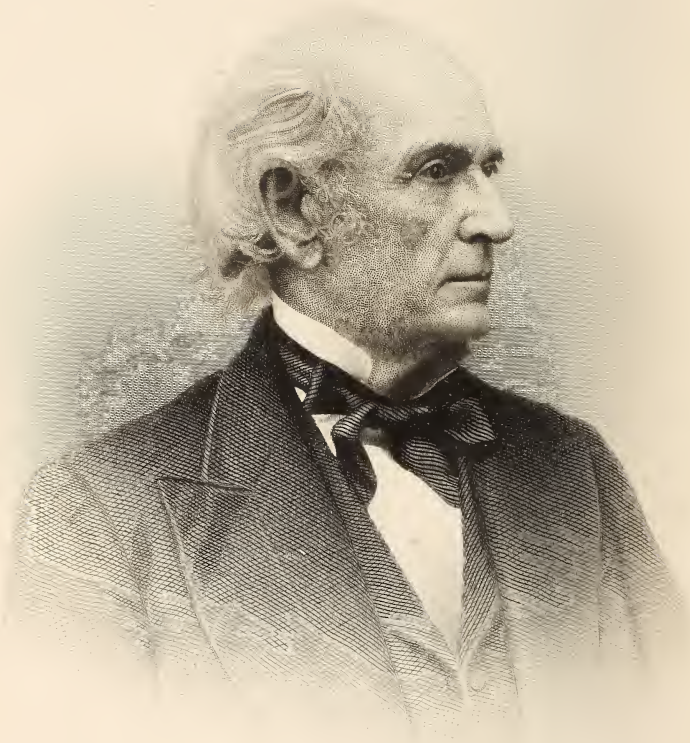

A. G. Palmer

A MEMORIAL

OF

ALBERT GALLATIN PALMER, D. D.,

PREACHER, PASTOR, POET, SCHOLAR.

"Custodi innocentiam, et vidi aequitatem: quoniam sunt reliquiae homini pacifico."

PREPARED BY

EDWARD T. HISCOX, D. D.

ILLUSTRATED.

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DEDICATION.

TO THE FAMILY,

SO TENDERLY BELOVED AND SO GREATLY BEREAVED;

TO THE CHURCHES

HE SO FAITHFULLY SERVED, SO GREATLY EDIFIED, AND BY WHOM HE IS SO GRATEFULLY REMEMBERED;

TO HIS BRETHREN IN THE MINISTRY,

WHOSE FELLOWSHIP HE CHERISHED, WHOSE LIVES HE INFLUENCED, AND BY WHOM HE WAS BOTH HONORED AND REVERED;

TO THE CAUSE OF CHRISTIAN TRUTH,

SO DEAR TO HIS HEART, AND TO WHICH HE GAVE THE BEST ENERGIES OF A LONG AND SUCCESSFUL LIFE;

THIS MEMORIAL,

SO INADEQUATE TO DO JUSTICE TO ONE OF THE BEST AND NOBLEST OF MEN,

IS WITH

REVERENCE AND AFFECTION

DEDICATED.

PREFACE.

THE following pages require neither apology nor explanation, except to confess them utterly inadequate to give full expression to the worth of the subject as estimated by the writer, or the reverence and affection in which he was held by the family, for whom and by whose request this memento has been prepared. It is designed for private reflection, rather than for public comment; for the hearts that loved him; for the home which suffered so sad an eclipse when he left it; for the churches which he edified and by whom he was honored; and for that wide circle of personal friends in whose love and respect he had so large and so warm a place. But no imperfections of this memorial can detract from the honors with which so noble a life was invested, or dim the radiance of so pure a spirit and so resplendent a character as was his. It cannot hope, and does not affect to enhance them, but sets them forth, if possible, so as not to obscure

them. If a composite picture of a superb character and a beautiful life has been produced, with a sufficiently fair degree of fidelity to aid in keeping fresh in both memory and affection the original, its object will have been accomplished. The work might have been done by many an abler, but by no more appreciative, loving, or loyal hand.

A MEMORIAL

OF

ALBERT GALLATIN PALMER. D. D.

I.

Oh, leave this wretched, mouldering house of clay,
Shattered and tumbling down to earth and dust;
God's faithful hand will, at the appointed day,
A glorious form, restore the sacred trust.

A. G. PALMER.

The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance.—PSALM.

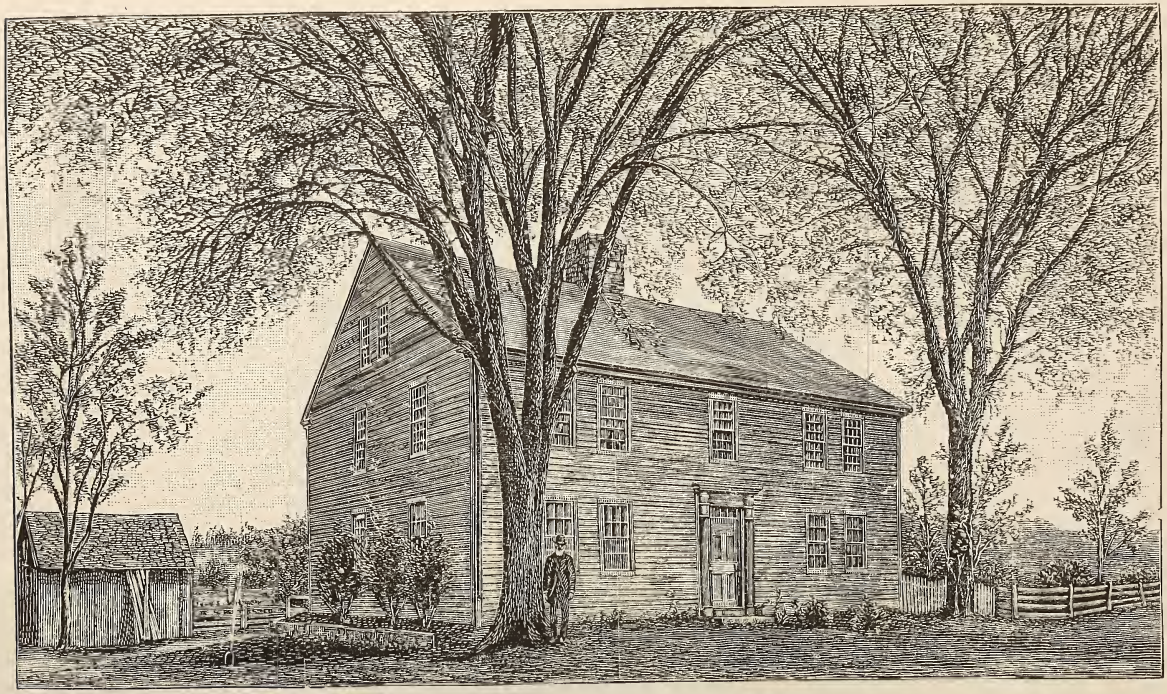
He that liveth and believeth shall never die.—JESUS.

Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple.—APOCALYPSE.

No human power can obliterate from the world in which it has had a place, or from the history of which it has been a part, the salutary influence of a good and a noble life. The fragrance lives after the flowers which produced it have been crushed and perished. Though its place cannot be found, nor its path be followed, yet, absorbed into universal ether, it helps to make the universe purer and sweeter. The world loses treasures richer than it knew itself to have possessed, and more than it knows how to

lament the loss of, when death removes the good from its midst. Their true memorials are in the hearts of those who loved them. Their real monuments are the works they performed, which cannot die with them. But we do well to gather up the mementoes of the lives which we honor and would cherish, and place them about us as silent but sacred monitors of the past. They are frail, though possibly effectual, reminders of what we have lost, and therefore of what we once possessed, and help to keep fresh and green in our memory and in our hearts the virtues which we prize and honor. Though gone, our loved ones are not dead. Though hidden from sight, they are still with us. Though the mortal bonds which bound us are sundered, they still are ours. They lived in our hearts and homes while here, and their lives mingled with ours and molded them in all that was good and true. Even yet they are our comfort and inspiration. And when at last we too shall cease from earth, our pulseless hearts shall be the silent tombs of cherished memories whose resurrection shall hail the radiant portals of life, and welcome the glories of an endless day.

Albert Gallatin Palmer was born May 11, 1813, in North Stonington, in the State of Connecticut. He was the third son of Luther and Sarah K. Palmer, and the sixth child in a family



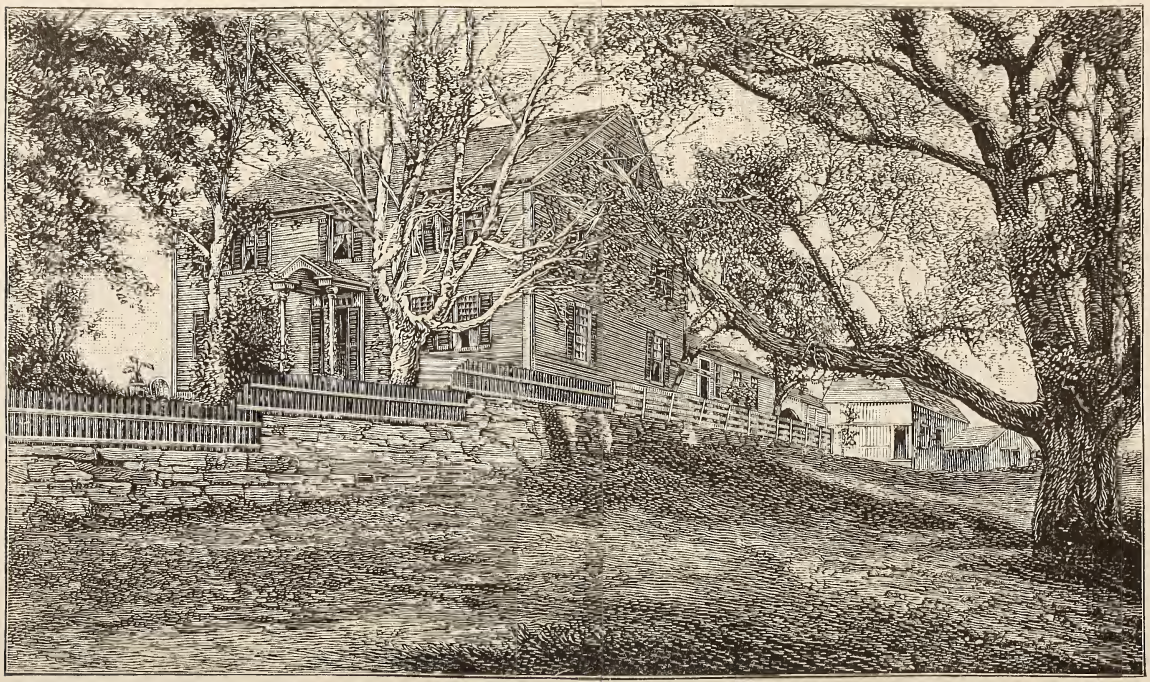
A. M. Palmer's Birthplace, North Stonington, Ct.

of seven sons and seven daughters. The Palmers are of old New England Puritan stock, whose numerous branches are scattered widely over all parts of our country, especially through the Eastern, Middle, and Western States. They are to be found in all departments of business and professional life, and no strain of early New England society has filled more honorably or usefully the various industrial and official positions than have they.

North Stonington consists of the northern portion of the original town of Stonington, erected into a separate township for the greater convenience of its citizens. It lies back from the seashore from eight to twenty miles, and is, for New England, a good and fruitful farming country. The people are well-to-do farmers for the most part, manufacturing and commercial enterprises having not as yet—certainly not at the time of which we write—invaded that quiet region, as they have not to any considerable extent even till now. The people constituted an intelligent, hard-working community, procuring an abundant support by honest industry. Their children were reared in virtuous habits, and were educated with such facilities as the times afforded. To a great extent the people were religious, and the "meeting house" and the "school house" were essential parts of every town. Very largely through this section of Connecticut

and the adjoining State of Rhode Island, the people were Baptists. They procured competency of living by honest labor, worshiped God with sincerity, educated their children in intelligence and good morals, as the best legacy they could bequeath to the next generation.

The old Palmer homestead, roomy, homelike, and comfortable, with its shade trees and outbuildings fitted for the conveniences of farming life, stands on the old post road from Westerly, distant ten miles, and Stonington Borough, distant fifteen miles, leading through Milltown, and running on north to Voluntown, Sterling, and Plainfield in Windham County. It traverses for the most part the "hill country" of Eastern Connecticut. The particular location of "the Palmer place" is now known as "Pendleton Hill," which designates its post office, several families of Pendletons having resided in the immediate neighborhood. Formerly it was known by the more poetical, and perhaps the more appropriate, title of Pauchunganuc Hill, a name preserving the memory of the early Indian occupants and traditions of these romantic regions. The house has undergone many changes and a considerable enlargement, but a part of the present building was a portion of that in which he was born. The front yard has been transformed, and is now decorated with flowering shrubbery, and in summer time is fragrant with pots and tubs of



The Palmer Homestead, Pendleton Hill, North Stonington, Ct.
Rev. Dr. Palmer's Birthplace.

flowering plants. The most conspicuous of the trees which shade the place is an immense willow on the right of the entrance from the country road, standing in an angle of the meadow wall and throwing a gigantic arm entirely across the driveway from the road to the barn behind the house. As to this venerable and grand old tree, there is a domestic tradition which has some slight variations as related by different members of the family. The children of Dr. Palmer state that he had often told them that when a boy he stuck the willow switch into the moist soil where it took root, and through the years of his life grew to its present enormous proportions, still flourishing in almost perpetual youth, though the hand that planted it has mouldered into dust.

From this elevated outlook an extensive and most charming view presents itself, a wide and varied landscape of surpassing rural beauty. Woodland and intervale, green pastures and cultivated fields, rich meadowlands and orchards, with farm houses dotting the extended view. On the east, the eye, sweeping over a lovely and quiet valley, catches sight of the silvery Paucatuc, pursuing its sinuous and romantic course to the sea not far away, and marking the boundary line between the States of Connecticut and Rhode Island. At the south, the Atlantic lays in fair view, and with a clear atmosphere Block Island, fifteen miles out at sea and thirty miles away

from the observer, can be distinctly seen by the naked eye. It is even declared that Montauk Point lighthouse can be seen from this elevation without the aid of a glass. One who was a playmate and schoolmate of the subject of this sketch, born in the same neighborhood and at about the same time, says: "There is not another place on earth so precious to me as Pendleton Hill. It is beautiful for situation." *

It was in this sphere of natural beauty that Albert G. Palmer first saw the light, and where the years of his childhood and youth were spent. These charms of nature in rural life were calculated to make a deep and lasting, though perhaps at the time an unconscious impression on his sensitive and poetic temperament. It is not likely that he could then have analyzed the emotions which these external pictures produced in his mind, or trace their subtle influence on him in after years. But they surely went far to mold and fashion the character and life which grew to such proportions of symmetry and nobleness. This early fellowship with nature made its impression on his delicate and responsive nature, and fostered,

* Rev. B. F. Chapman, at present (Jan. 16, 1892) living in Andover, Conn. Of Mr. Palmer, he says: "We were about the same age, and it was only some five minutes walk from our house to his father's. We used to be together daily. He was the *third son* of a family of *thirteen* children, and I was the *third son* of a family of *thirteen* children." The Palmer family had fourteen children, but one dying in infancy occasioned the above estimate as to numbers.

if it did not create, that undercurrent of poetic melody which even in childhood sang through his spirit, and in after life touched all his mental processes, and developed into more pronounced and rhythmic expressions of poetic inspiration.* He did, however, in subsequent years, attribute much of the idealistic and sympathetic in his nature to the pervading and molding influence of these scenes of loveliness with which his early years had fellowship. To him, as he grew older, they bore a charmed existence. Oft as he could he would revisit them, and drink in their inspiration with speechless delight. He never tired of wandering over his native hills and through the fields which recalled his childhood. He would roam from cellar to attic through the house where he was born, and live over again "the years of long ago." No other place on earth was so much home to him as that, and no other did he love so well. His poetic reference to it expresses that love :

Hail, old Pauchunganuc, land of my birth!
Thy airy heights o'erlooking wide the sea!
To me thou art the dearest spot on earth,
Home of a proud and noble ancestry,
I never may forget, where'er I roam,
The beauties of my childhood's highland home.

* A volume of poetic excerpta, edited by his daughter, Miss Sara A. Palmer, was issued in 1884 from the press of Lockwood, Brainard & Co., Hartford, Conn., which received marked commendations not only from personal friends, but from literary men and authors, including the poet Whittier.

It is noted that he was not naturally a remarkably strong and rugged child. But out-of-door habits, a plenty of exercise in the pure air, work on the farm, and such a life as children bred in the country have the advantage of living, with great nervous and mental vitality, gave a foundation for good health through a long and very active life. He was fond of boyish sports, but still more fond of books, the supply of which at that day, to a boy bred in the country, was by no means abundant. His father was a great reader, but books were a luxury even to him. At school he was an apt and studious pupil, distancing the greater part of his schoolmates in their common studies. But he was, as one of his contemporaries asserts, a general favorite among the children, whether in the schoolroom, on the playground, or elsewhere.

As to his name, it is related that at his birth there was not an agreement concerning a title for the new comer, and for some little time the child was nameless. While an infant in the cradle, the Hon. Albert Gallatin was a conspicuous figure in American politics. Mr. Gallatin was a native of Switzerland, but came early to this country, in 1780, took active part in the struggle of the colonies for independence, was a participant in the later years of the Revolutionary War, and subsequently a United States senator. Under President Jefferson, he was for a time secretary

of the treasury, and subsequently special commissioner to Great Britain to arrange terms of peace. Afterward he was sent as minister to Paris, and later still as ambassador extraordinary to London. Mr. Palmer concluded it would be every way appropriate to have in his family a namesake of so distinguished a statesman and patriot whom he so greatly admired. And so the child was named Albert Gallatin.

II.

His Childhood and Youth.

At the early age of two and a half years, he suffered the greatest loss which can befall infancy or childhood, in the death of his mother. A loss which no amount of sympathy and kindness ministered by surviving friends can ever, under ordinary circumstances, fully make good. All that could be done to mitigate such a bereavement was done by the kindness of his father and the affectionate interest of older brothers and sisters, and subsequently by the prudent and faithful care and the truly loving ministry of a step-mother, who later came into the family. Childhood has its sorrows as well as mature years. But it is a merciful dispensation that they can be soon forgotten in the hopes and joys which share their companionship. His daughter writes: "I have so many things I want to tell you of what father has said to me of his childhood. His love for his father, his feelings of perfect rest when, after the day's work was done, sitting at the evening hour before the great log fire, his father would take him between his knees, and pulling his head down, say, 'My good boy,

Allie.' Oh, he has so often told me of those days that I can see them now. How he used to watch with throbbing heart, if his father was a little late at coming home, or run down the dark road to meet him." Of the second mother, it is due to both her memory and his to say, that she proved a true mother to him as well as to the other children of her charge. He ever referred to her with the utmost respect and affection. Between her own and the children she received from the mother whose place she came to fill, no difference was shown. When he professed faith in Christ she bore the most positive testimony in favor of his conversion, from the evidence she gained in his daily life. And it is right to believe that her prayers mingled with those of the mother who bore him, and together were blessed of God to his early call and his assured conversion. And by a marked coincidence, he and his step-mother were baptized at the same time, and together received into the church.

His boyhood was spent in active service, on the farm during the summer and at school during the winter months. The educational advantages of a country district at that time were very limited. But such as they were, he enjoyed and improved them, but longed for larger opportunities. A contemporary of his school days bears witness to the excellency of his scholarship, and says that he was specially proficient in history, of

which he was very fond. He also mentions the fact that, like his father, he was very fond of reading, and mentions two books which were his special favorites. The one was "Robinson Crusoe," the ever and everywhere famed delight of childhood, and the other was "Pollock's Course of Time," whose gorgeous poetic imagery captivated his youthful fancy, and not only gratified, but nourished the poetic sentiment of his nature, so largely developed in later life. In a poem on "Self-culture," written later in life, he makes the following reference to the latter work as evidence of his appreciation of the author:

> Or happier far, like Pollock's sacred lyre
> Rapt in the visions of prophetic fire,
> Attuned in strains of melody sublime,
> In boyhood even, to his Course of Time.

As to his religious feelings during childhood and youth, it is not so easy now to speak, since those who survive recall but few of his personal references to them, and most of those who may have been familiar with them at the time have passed away. At his examination by council for ordination, these were of course rehearsed, but no record survives; and if any who were present on that occasion still live, they could not probaby recollect them with distinctness. It is, however, easy to believe that, surrounded by the influences of his childhood, attending church, and

being in many ways brought in contact with religious truth, his moral nature must have responded by many serious thoughts and pungent convictions, even in his childhood, as to his personal call to a religious life. Those too were times when revivals prevailed; not unfrequently of wide extent and of great power. Direct efforts for the conversion of children were not then so common as now; and even, in some cases, such efforts were discredited, if not discouraged. Nevertheless, children thought, and the Spirit touched their hearts, and the work of saving grace was at times magnified in childhood as well as in age.

Called of God, as was Aaron, the time finally came when the calling and election were made manifest. His conversion occurred in the autumn of 1822, at the age of nine years, during a time of prevailing revival in the church and neighborhood under the ministry of the pastor, Rev. Jonathan Miner. Having been brought out of darkness into light, it was his desire to be baptized, with other converts, at that time. But with the prevailing parental caution of the times, his father wished him to wait. Of course the baptism was put off, and this public dedication of himself to the service of Christ did not take place till July 18, 1830. Eight years after he professed faith in the Saviour. At that time, according to the church records, he was buried with Christ in bap-

tism by the pastor, Rev., or as he was universally known, *Elder* Jonathan Miner, a man of marked ability, of devout and godly spirit, widely known and of large influence through all Eastern Connecticut; and one of the last of that generation of noble men who, amidst great difficulties, contended earnestly for the faith once for all delivered to the saints. Thus his baptism and uniting with the church occurred at the age of seventeen years.

ALBERT G. PALMER.
At the Age of Eighteen Years.

III.

His Life-work Begun.

So soon as he became a member of the church, and thus publicly committed to a religious life, he began "to exercise and improve his gifts" in a public way, by taking part in religious meetings. Rev. B. F. Chapman, already mentioned, the companion of his boyhood, and personally familiar with his early Christian experience, says: "In 1831, there was a precious revival in North Stonington, and both he and myself were quite active in the meetings. We held meetings together without the presence of any minister. I had no idea at that time that either of us would ever become a preacher of the gospel." This was the year after his baptism. Whatever may have been the effect of these things on his own mind, it is very evident that they impressed the church with the conviction that he was called to be a preacher of the gospel. For the records show that November 4, 1832, the church voted him a license to hold meetings and expound the Scriptures with their approval. Such a letter was prepared and presented to the church for

their approval by the pastor, Rev. Jonathan Miner, November 10, 1832.*

What had been his thoughts and feelings with reference to the Christian ministry during the eight years which had elapsed since his conversion, we have no means of determining. The probability is that the subject had been frequently, if not constantly, present with him. For it is evident the Spirit was preparing him for the work. It is certain that soon after his baptism the subject took full possession of his mind. Not, however, as a welcome guest, but as one most unwelcome, which he was compelled to entertain. His was the singularly paradoxical and strangely contradictory experience of not a few divinely called to a ministry of the word, that of desiring and yet of dreading it; of being both attracted and repelled by it. Rev. Mr. Chapman says: "I was the first he made acquainted with his trials concerning preaching. He was loath to undertake the work. He had rather die than

* This license has been carefully preserved, and was found among his papers. It reads as follows:

"We hereby certify that Brother Albert G. Palmer is a regular member of the First Baptist Church in North Stonington—that he is a man of good moral and Christian character—that for some time past he has been in the practice of improving his gifts by way of preaching, and in so doing has the fellowship of the church. We believe him one whom God has designed for the gospel ministry.

By order and in behalf of the First Baptist Church in North Stonington, Conn. SMITH CHAPMAN,

Church Clerk."

N. Stonington, November 10, 1832.

preach, he said. He used to have seasons of earnest prayer that he might rather die than preach." But such feelings did not long continue, and failed to control his life.

All this may seem very strange to those unacquainted with the operations of a sensitive and conscientious mind, under the pressure of grave responsibilities attending such a life-service as that of the Christian ministry, with its varied demands and multiplied difficulties. Very strange to some who have heard much talk about being "sweetly given up to the will of God, and having no wish but to do that will." There are many sides to these great questions of conscience, consecration, and submission; and a divine philosophy is in them all, understood only by those who are led by the Spirit through them all. But his father was remembered to have said, that "Albert was thinking of little else than preaching, no matter what else he might be doing." Several now living state that they heard his first sermon. It was preached in the old meeting house on the hill, from the text, 1 Cor. 9 : 16 : "Woe is unto me if I preach not the gospel." He dwelt much upon the trials and sufferings of the apostle in the ministry of the gospel during his long and eventful life.

This was in 1832, two years after his baptism, and at the age of nineteen years. Making a period of *fifty-nine years* between the preaching of

his first and his last sermon. But this "first sermon" could not have been the first time he actually preached. Probably it was the first time he had been publicly advertised to preach. But from the time of his baptism he was accustomed to speak in the meetings, and sometimes to "lead the meetings," opening them with an address which was substantially a sermon. His daughter remembers to have heard him tell of preaching when scarcely more than sixteen, and wondering how he dared to attempt it. He especially mentioned one occasion, when, at seventeen, having gone to Stonington Borough on business for his father, and being detained over night he attended an evening meeting, and was persuaded to "speak to the people," which he did with great acceptance to them, if not to himself. And the license given by the church mentions the fact that for some time past he had been accustomed to improve his gifts by preaching. It may here be noticed that the prevailing traits which marked his style of pulpit address remained from first to last. His preaching was characterized by an earnestness, an intensity of thought and of action, which never failed to command the serious attention of his audiences.

From the records of the Baptist Church in Andover, Conn., a few miles remote from North Stonington Church, it appears that he was invited to supply the pulpit of their church for one

year, they being without a pastor at the time. After a good deal of hesitancy on his part, and considerable urgency on theirs, the invitation was accepted, and he served them from March, 1833, to March, 1834, with great acceptance. The compensation for his services as proposed by the church, and we believe faithfully paid, was: "Salary $200, with board, and a new suit of clothes." For the times, and the church, which was small, and the fact that he was very young, the conditions seem to have been fairly just. Country churches at that time had not very enlarged notions as to the salaries of their pastors. Indeed, they had not usually very enlarged means for their supply. He certainly performed ministerial service enough, preaching three times each Sunday: at 10.30 A. M., at 1 P. M., and at 5 P. M. in the summer; and in the evening during the winter, probably at "candle lighting," which was the traditional hour for evening service, at whatever o'clock that might chance to be. The laborer certainly was worthy of his hire.

How a young man without previous preparation, save an occasional sermon, could be expected to prepare and deliver three sermons each week, in addition to pastoral duties, prayer meetings, and other services, is more than one can comprehend; and how he succeeded in doing it for a year, is more than one can comprehend. No doubt the people thought it easy

enough; and many pastors, both old and young, have done the best they could to sustain such an arrangement. The custom of the people in those days in country-located churches, as many of us remember, was to have the forenoon sermon, then an hour of intermission for lunch, rest, and a little Sunday visiting by neighbors who seldom met at other times, and then another sermon; after which they scattered to their homes. At the evening service, which was likely held in some convenient school house, the congregation consisted largely of young persons to whom attendance on an evening meeting was something of a recreation, as well as an occasion for worship. But it was no recreation to the pastor.

There is a characteristic incident related in connection with the young preacher's engagement to supply the pulpit of the Andover Church. Rev. Levi Walker, a venerable preacher and friend of Albert's father, had an engagement to visit somewhere and preach. He took Albert along for company. On the Sunday of their absence, Mr. Walker had an appointment to preach at Andover. He finally succeeded in persuading his young companion to preach in his stead. The impression made on the people led the church, then and there, to request him to supply them permanently. He hesitated and declined; but they were persistent. The next

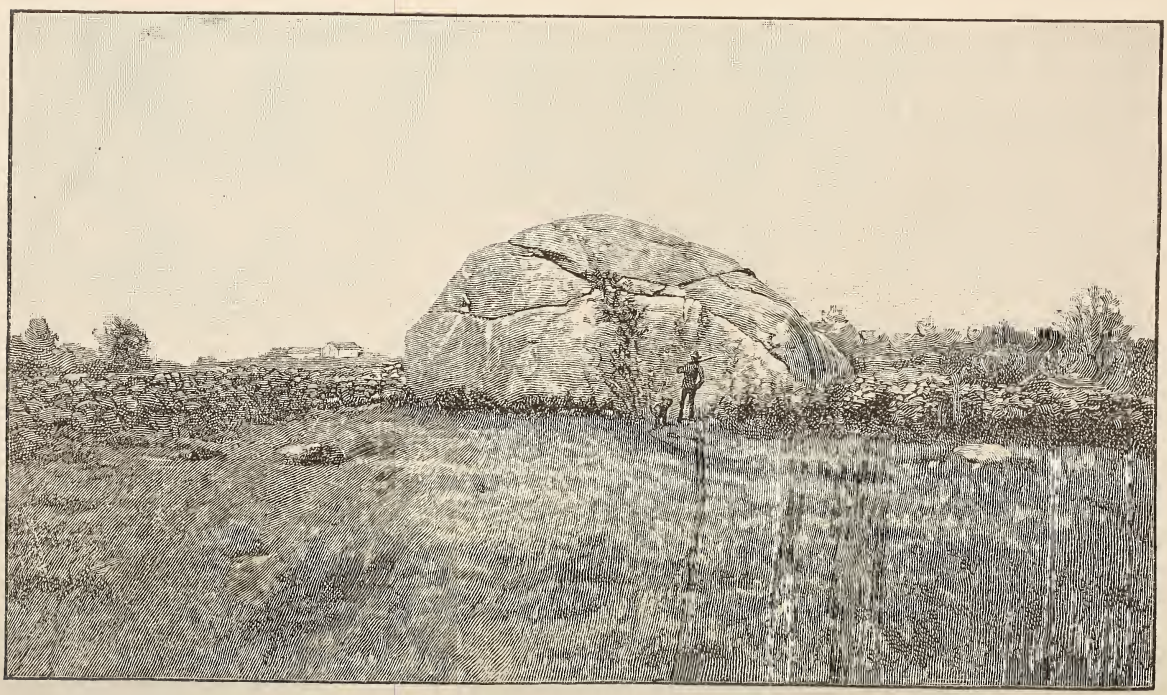
day he was to return home, but Deacon Lyman, with whom he was staying, was so intent on securing his services, and so fearful that he might fail, that he sent his son home with him, with instructions not to return without bringing Albert back. After consultation with his father, who finally favored the plan, he yielded and returned to spend a year as acting pastor at Andover. There is no doubt, though the year's work severely taxed his endurance and his resources, that nevertheless it was greatly beneficial to him as an experience in the ministry, as well as to the people he served.

IV.

His Ordination Follows.

As matters now stood, it was evident that his ordination and official setting apart to the work of the ministry, could not be long delayed. The church records show that at a meeting held October 19, 1834, "A vote was passed that Albert G. Palmer be ordained next Sunday." This seems rather a sudden movement, judging from this entry alone. But the matter had evidently received previous consideration. "And at the request of Elder Gideon B. Perry, it was also voted that the ordination take place at Hopkinton, R. I." This somewhat strange plan was carried out, and in the twenty-first year of his age, he was publicly set apart to the official work of the ministry, October 26, 1834, in the Baptist church, Hopkinton, R. I. It seemed inappropriate, and was quite contrary to the wishes of his family and church, that his ordination did not take place at his home. But they yielded to the earnest request of Mr. Perry in the matter, against their own judgments and wishes.*

* For the facts and statements from the records of "the Old Church on the Hill," I am chiefly indebted to Mr. Asher Chapman, a brother of Rev.



Pauchunganuc Rock, Pendleton Hill, North Stonington, Ct.

The foregoing facts need some explanation. Rev. Gideon B. Perry was a Baptist minister of great popularity as an eloquent preacher through Eastern Connecticut. Older than Mr. Palmer, he had become greatly interested in him and much attached to him. He evidently saw large promise of future usefulness and distinction in the young man now scarcely more than a boy. Notwithstanding the disparity in their ages, they became strongly attached and life-long friends. Mr. Perry had been preaching at the old church during a season of special religious interest, and was present at the church meeting above mentioned. A new church had recently been formed at Hopkinton, R. I. (known as Hopkinton City), which church was to be formally recognized on the following Sunday. It was probably thought that the ordination of young Palmer at the same time would give additional interest to the occasion, and also obviate the necessity for calling another council at some other time and place. The church, however, granted the request of Mr. Perry, though reluctantly. But who it was that preached the ordination sermon on the occasion, and the names of the ministers who took part in the services, no data at present accessible deter-

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B. F. Chapman, who has for many years been clerk of the church, and holds the records in his possession. He still holds his membership there and continues to act as clerk, strange to say, though residing in Westerly, R. I., ten miles distant, and eighty-five years of age.

mines beyond what the certificate of his ordination states.*

It may be of interest to add, that on December 22, 1835, a little more than one year after his ordination, he received a call from the Hopkinton Church to become its pastor through the church committee, consisting of Gideon B. Perry, Benj. B. Thurston, Henry M. Wells, and Charles Noyes. The salary offered was two hundred and fifty dollars. But the call was declined, for what reasons is not stated.

Under date of June 7, 1835, the minutes show that the church voted Mr. Palmer a letter with which to unite with the church at Methuen, Mass. For what purpose this transfer of membership was made I have not been able definitely to ascertain. But as it was about this time he spent some months in theological studies at the seminary at Andover, Mass., the probability is that he concluded to hold his membership in the Methuen Church while so engaged. But his residence at Andover did not prove so pleasant, or promise so well as he had anticipated, and his stay was not very protracted. In October of the same year an arrangement was effected by which he

* "This may certify that Albert G. Palmer was regularly set apart by ordination, to the work of the gospel ministry, at Hopkinton, R. I., October 26, 1834, in accordance with a vote of the First Baptist Church, in North Stonington, of which said Palmer is a member."

G. B. PERRY, *Moderator*.
LEVI MEACH, *Clerk*.

was secured to supply the pulpit of his own church in North Stonington till the following April. March 19, 1836, he was received back into the church by a letter from that in Methuen, and his ministry in the old church continued till April, 1837, when it was terminated by his acceptance of a call extended to him by the Baptist church in Westerly, R. I.

It was during this early period of his ministry thus terminated, that the writer first met him in the summer of 1836. There I heard him preach in the old house erected in 1830, and still standing after various transformations, having taken the place of the original building in which the church had worshiped from its organization, in 1743. This house has within a few years past been repaired and improved, and is a neat and attractive edifice, its services well attended, with a large number of young people in its congregation. Its pastor for many years, Rev. D. F. Chapman, greatly beloved and lamented, lately died, after a long and painful illness. At this time of our first meeting, Mr. Palmer was twenty-three, in the flush, freshness, and enthusiasm of young manhood; myself a few years younger. There began the brotherhood of sympathy and affection which continued without abatement or interruption till he was removed by death,—and still survives, in one at least, though loftier themes no doubt do now command his soul's re-

gard. And it so happened that our ministerial lives were for many years cast near each other, and at no time were we very far removed apart; and so we often met.

The First Baptist Church in North Stonington is one of the oldest in Connecticut, having been constituted in September, 1743. It was all Stonington then, as the town had not as yet been divided. The church in Groton dates back to 1705. Now there are at least three Baptist churches in North Stonington itself. It seems peculiarly fitting that one whose long and able ministry was destined to exert such a molding and beneficent influence, and leave such deep and lasting impressions on Southeastern Connecticut and Southwestern Rhode Island, should have had his early Christian and his earliest ministerial experience in the old historic church, on Pauchunganuc Hill.* His pastorate there,

* The name is an Indian classic and is variously spelled and differently interpreted. Ordinarily, and for convenience, it is spoken Paukhunkanuk, or shorter still, Puckhunkanuk. But literary critics in this department of language insist that the proper spelling is that of the text above—*Pauchunganuc*. This is the spelling of Dr. Palmer himself in one of his idyls, and was, he claimed, the correct form of the word. As to its origin and meaning, there is an equal diversity of opinion. Rev. B. F. Chapman, who spent his boyhood and youth and many of his later years in that immediate vicinity, and to whom I am indebted for many items of information, spells it *Puckhonganock*. He says the word is not found in any Indian vocabulary. He gives the following as the local tradition concerning its origin. An Indian, with his bow and arrow, shot a wild goose on the wing, and as the bird fell it struck upon an immense rock near by, uttering a cry which formed this word so distinctly that the

however, was not destined to parallel, in length at least, those of his predecessors, four of whom remained with the church for from twenty to twenty-five years each. These periods, however, were far exceeded later in life by his pastorate in the old south-town where he finished his work. But when Mr. Palmer's ministry began, a period of transition to shorter pastorates had set in, a period of more and more pronounced development, until the present time. Whether for good or ill, each one will judge for himself. The changes which have taken place in society appear

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Indian repeated it and applied it to the rock, by which name it was henceforth known, and subsequently was applied to the whole neighborhood. That rock, he adds, "is a great curiosity, and people come from far to see it." When a post office was located in the place, the difficulty of speaking and writing the word led to a change of name, and it is now known as "Pendleton Hill," from a prominent family in whose house the office at first was located. The office now for several years, however, has been kept in the old Palmer mansion, the postmaster being Mr. Robert Palmer, a younger brother of the subject of this sketch. This famous rock is an immense boulder, lying in a field about a quarter of a mile from the Palmer homestead. It stands above ground eighteen feet, and is one hundred and eight feet in girth; is of irregular shape, but somewhat oval and rounded, and is probably forty-five feet in length by about thirty in thickness above the ground. I recently visited it and secured a photograph which appears herewith. How these immense boulders, wholly unconnected with any ledge or permanent rocky foundation, found their way to such lofty positions is left for scientific experts to determine. The above legend, as to the origin of the name, is rehearsed by him in a pastoral beginning:

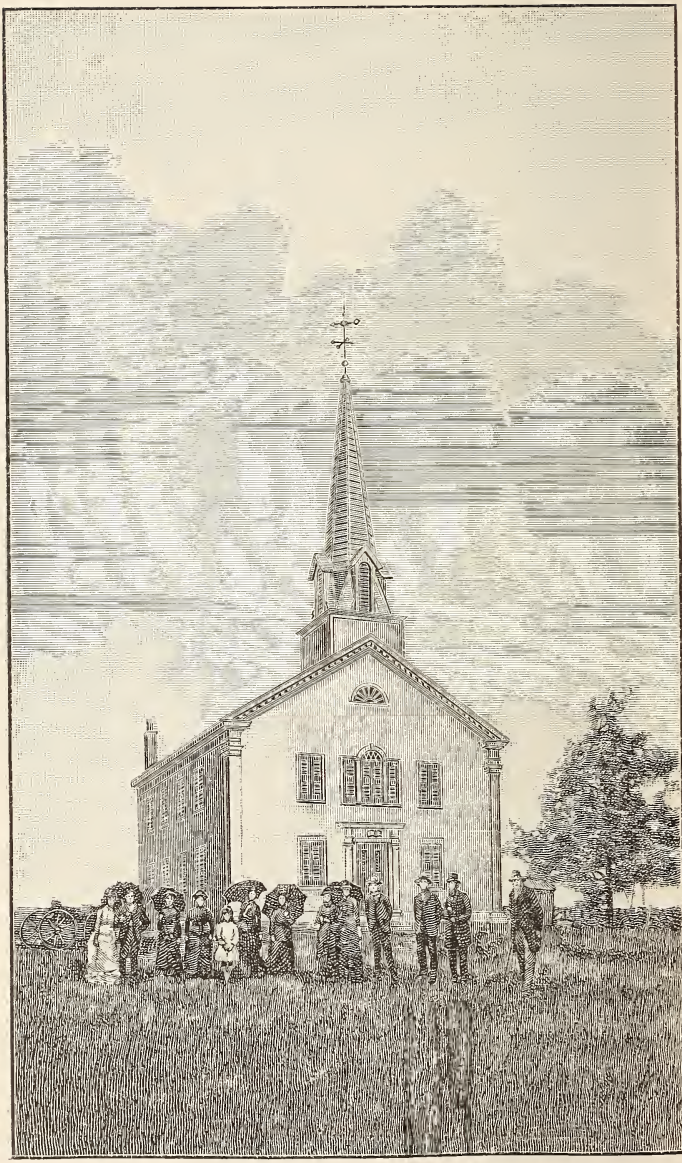
"Pauchunganuc, a famous rock,
An Alpine monolithic block;
A boulder of cyclopean stock."

He deeply regretted that the word, though difficult to speak, shall fall out of use, or cease to designate his birthplace.

to make these changes in pastorates inevitable, however they may be deplored. The ideal pastorate would seem to be the life-long pastorate. But such are not now to be expected; and could they be realized, would not be without their trials and disadvantages, as most current protracted pastorates prove.

The first pastor of this church was also a Palmer, Rev. Waite Palmer, ordained to the work and settled 1743, the year the church was constituted. His pastorate continued for *twenty-two years*. His successor, Rev. Eliezer Brown held the office for *twenty-five years*. And his successor, Rev. Peleg Randall, served it as pastor *twenty-three years*. Rev. Jonathan Miner, the eighth pastor, and the one under whom our subject was converted and brought into the church, filled the pastoral office *twenty years*. After that the pastorates were brief.

As to the first house of worship occupied by this body, I have failed to obtain any satisfactory information. Dr. Palmer often spoke of the recent improvements in the present edifice with peculiar pleasure. It seemed to him an evidence that the candlestick was not to be removed out of its place, but that the cause would be revived and enlarged on Pendleton Hill. In this same edifice, as at first constructed, he was converted, welcomed to the fellowship of the saints, and served the first year of his pastoral life.



First Baptist Church, North Stonington, Ct.
Erected in 1830.

V.

Two Decisive Events.

During the year 1837 transpired two events of marked and formative importance. One of these in a very special manner had its influence on his heart and life for all his after years. The first was his matriculation for a collegiate course of study in Brown University, Providence, R. I. His opportunities for academic studies, preparatory for this step, had been quite limited for want of suitable schools convenient of access. He had attended the academy at Kingston, R. I., where he pursued studies in Latin and Greek during the fall and winter terms. Afterward he continued these studies at the private classical school of Mr. Gallup, near his home. Subsequently, in connection with a few other young men, who clubbed together for boarding themselves and thus reducing expenses, his studies were further prosecuted at a school in Pawtucket, R. I. Such good use did he make of his time and opportunities, that when he presented himself at college for examination, that dreaded crucial trial was successfully passed, and he was admitted to the freshman class at Brown for 1837.

Most difficulties yield to a resolute will. He was a student by instinct, fond of reading and study, readily comprehending any subject under consideration, and by close application soon mastering any new branch of study attempted. His industry and persistent application served him well, as they will serve any one; far better than that brilliancy of genius which learns in a moment and forgets in an hour. He possessed that force of will which amounted to self-compulsion, holding his mind to the investigation of a subject until he mastered it.

But new obstacles arose. His father hardly felt able to meet the expense of a collegiate course for his son. Beside which, as one of his brothers certifies, his health had become seriously impaired by intense and long-continued application to study, in addition to preaching most of the time; finally, his plan for a collegiate course was definitely abandoned, and he resolved to enter at once and fully upon the work of the ministry, making such amends by private study for the want of a more extended systematic course as he could. This somewhat sudden decision on his part, was greatly regretted by some of his friends, inasmuch as his natural aptitude for theological and philosophical investigations, directed and matured by the liberal and systematic training of a university course, would have placed him in the very front rank of scholarship

in after years. But the truth is, that he felt his calling and profession to be that of a preacher of the gospel, an ambassador of Christ to men, and not a specialist in any department of human learning. That was the calling which he magnified and honored through life. He himself always believed that his decision with reference to his proposed collegiate course was a wise decision, one which he never regretted, and his judgment should be respected in the matter. It may be further said, that those who knew him in subsequent years need not be told, that even without the advantages which he resolved to forego, he attained an enviable degree of scholarship in both classical, theological, and philosophical learning, in which few graduates were his equal. And certainly, if more specific and protracted literary pursuits would have deadened the spiritual vitality of his ministrations, which was so marked a feature of himself and his services, it would have been a poor exchange for the cause of Christian truth and the edification of the churches. But this need not have been the result.

The other noted event of this year was his marriage on March 27, 1837, to Miss Sarah A. Langworthy, daughter of John and Sarah Langworthy, also of North Stonington. Mr. Palmer was twenty-four at this time, and his wife two years younger, having been born in Hopkinton, R. I., an adjoining town, December 27, 1815.

Her father was a deacon in the Seventh Day Baptist church of that town, of which church his daughter was also a member. Of this marriage, and the brief married life which they were permitted to enjoy, it is difficult to speak in befitting terms without appearing to be extravagant. As children they grew up together, schoolmates and playmates almost from infancy. She was beautiful in person, lovely in spirit, gentle in disposition, bright, attractive, and most charming in manners. She was as artless and lovely as the violets in her native glens; as unconscious of self and as unaffected in her manners as the wild rose that bloomed on her native hills; the cowslip that grew in the modest retirement beside the rippling brooks, was not more simple, retiring, and sincere in native loveliness than was Sarah Langworthy, the sweetest flower of all that region; while a youthful piety, unpretentious but genuine, at once devout and cheerful, crowned and gave added charms to her person and her character.

Long years afterward he painted her with poetic touch as she lived in his memory:

> The beauty of this child no art can paint,
> No speech, nor pen, her loveliness declare;
> In early girlhood she became a saint,
> A Christian girl of chastened beauty rare;
> Scarcely the Virgin, in her maiden days,
> Could have surpassed the beauty of her ways.

When first we met by seeming chance,
Exchanging just a passing glance.

And later still in life, his muse indited the same exalted estimate in his lines, "To the wife of my youth:"

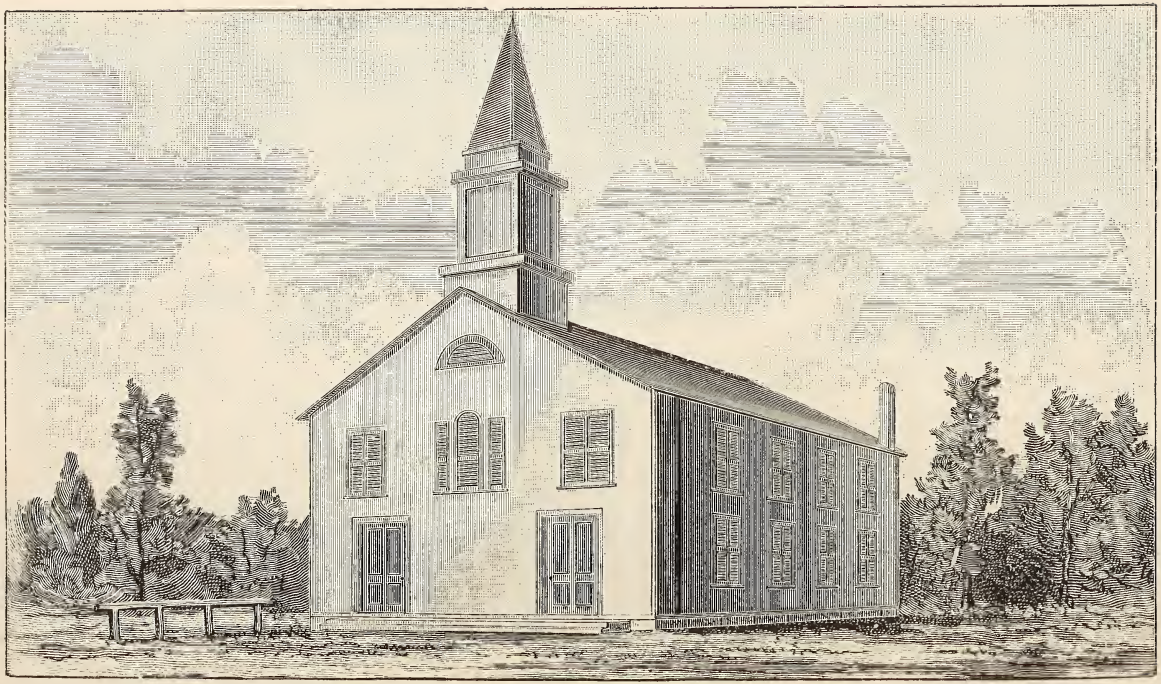
I long have sought the world around,
With yearning, painful scrutiny,
If aught on earth might still be found,
That faintly would resemble thee.
But earth's most beautiful and fair,
Its loveliest, sweetest specimens,
To thee as glittering jewels are,
Compared with priceless, burning gems.

The union was an ideal one. The brief life which followed realized fully the pledge of their plighted faith and their marriage vows. That brief life! For on the seventh anniversary of their wedding day she was removed by sudden death from the husband she had loved so fondly, from the home she had made so bright, and from the two infant children left motherless, but too young to know the greatness of their loss. Mr. Palmer never seemed to fully recover from the crushing blow of that sad bereavement. The loss of that lovely wife, that saintly girl,—scarcely more than a girl when she was called home,—touched and chastened all his after life. Though removed, to him she was a presence ever near. Not the overshadowing of a somber grief, but the illumination and cheer of an angelic fellow-

ship. No one can mistake the reference in the following lines, from a poem written years afterward:

> Her image lives within my heart,
> In memory's sweetest light enshrined.
> Her loveliness unmocked by art,
> Is brightly mirrored on my mind.

His marriage decided on, his future course was determined by more definite lines of action. He was now, and henceforth, to give himself without reserve to the active ministry of the gospel of Christ in all departments of its service. As a prophet, he was not without honor in his own country, and among his own kindred. In the neighborhood where he was born and reared, in the church where he was converted and baptized, where his first Christian testimony had been heard and his first sermon preached, there was he loved, honored, and listened to as a teacher of religious truth and an expounder of the Scriptures with respect and affection. So, in after years, when his reputation as an able minister of the New Testament had been established, and his name and fame had become more widely known, they were proud of him. So they honor and revere his memory now that he has passed away.



The Old Union Meeting House, Westerly, R. I.

VI.

His Pastorate at Westerly, R. I.

On March 3, 1837, the Baptist church at Westerly, R. I., voted a unanimous call to Rev. Albert G. Palmer to become their pastor. He replied in a letter received by the church March 27, accepting the call. With that month his service with the church on Pendleton Hill terminated, and he entered upon his new charge April 1, 1837.

The church at Westerly was constituted August 31, 1835; and September 16, 1835, it was duly recognized by a council convened for that purpose, according to Baptist usage. At the same time, and by the same council, Rev. John Waterman was duly set apart to the work of the ministry by formal ordination, and recognized as pastor of the church. Mr. Waterman was a recent graduate from Brown University, a man of culture and fine abilities, and of admirable Christian spirit. But his ministry and his life were brief. His health soon failed, and after a pastorate of about eight months, he resigned May 23, 1836, and died not long after. The pulpit was variously supplied until the following April, when Mr. Palmer commenced his ministry

among them. He was now fairly embarked on his life's professional voyage. Up to this time, and for some five years, he had been exercising his ministry at home, and among those with whom he had his birth, and had been reared. They had been years of training and pupilage, and of practical experience. And the experience had been of great advantage to him. Now he was to set his sails for unknown seas, with all the possibilities and all the liabilities which are incident to the Christian minister's work. But he was devoutly reliant on three sources of guidance and support, on three guarantees of inspiration and success. The presence of his divine Lord, the chief Shepherd, for whom he wrought with the sure promise of his unfailing help always and everywhere; the inspiration and direction of the Holy Spirit, by whom his ministry should be adapted and made effectual to men; the living power of the Word which he was to preach, and which by the Spirit should slay and make alive. By these alone can any herald of the great salvation hope for success, and by these can any and all truly called of God to such an embassage come off more than conqueror through him who giveth the victory.

His ministry in Westerly began auspiciously. The church was not large, but it was united and active. The people were sympathetic and aggressive in Christian work. The prayer-meeting

element in the church was largely developed. They believed in direct and earnest labors for the salvation of souls. The brief ministry of their first and only pastor had been peaceful and harmonious in its influence. No roots of bitterness, or elements of strife and dissension, had been developed among them. The population was not large, but growing, and alive with energy and enterprise. The entire community was predisposed to Baptist sentiments. Churches in the near vicinity, both Seventh Day and First Day Baptists, had long existed, and the population generally was inclined to their views. An Episcopal church had previously been organized, but like other denominational interests subsequently formed, it was composed largely of material reared under Baptist influences. No one will wonder at this who recalls the fact of Rhode Island's Baptistic origin, and the further fact that Southwestern Rhode Island—Westerly and its adjoining towns—was from its earliest settlement one of the most Baptistic portions of the State. In like manner Southeastern Connecticut, adjoining, was the most intensely Baptistic portion of that State, as certified to by the rapid increase of Baptists there, in spite of bitter opposition, and the persecutions they early endured for conscience sake from their fellow Christians of the "standing order."

A period of great spiritual prosperity to the

church followed almost immediately on the commencement of Mr. Palmer's ministry, and the church was greatly enlarged and strengthened. Extra meetings were held and large numbers were converted. The records show that August 12, 1837, thirteen persons were received for baptism. August 19, twenty-four more were received. August 27, two more were received. Thirty-nine during that month, and just two years after the organization of the body. The infancy of that church, which we now call the "old church," was cradled in revivals, and imbued with a revival spirit from its birth, which it has never wholly lost. The Spirit was thus early setting his seal to the ministry of the young pastor, and perhaps giving him the assurance that he had followed the divine leadings when he had denied himself a college course for an immediate entrance on the duties of his calling.

The church records were kept by different clerks during the following years, and afford a very disjointed and imperfect history of events, But they were years of enlargement and upbuilding, not only as to numbers, but as to the development of Christian character and of religious activity on the part of the members. Other seasons of special refreshing occurred, of which the records make no mention. During the winter of 1842-3, there was an almost continuous revival. Some twenty were baptized in December,

and more than forty in January. In the midst of this prosperity, and greatly to the surprise of the church and the community, the pastor offered his resignation. There was no difficulty; everything was harmonious between pastor and people; the church had never before been in so prosperous a condition. He was greatly beloved by the people, which affectionate regard he fully reciprocated; a feeling which on both sides was tenderly cherished through his life.

The church was anxious to know the reasons for this unlooked-for step on his part. The records afford a very scanty and unsatisfactory explanation of the matter. They state that he presented "certain conditions," on compliance with which he would remain. These conditions are not defined, but it is well known that the principal one, possibly the only one, was the inconvenience to which they were subjected for want of a house of worship. From its organization, the church had usually occupied a "union meeting house," built by the citizens generally, the use of which no church or preacher could exclusively control. Any one could claim its occupancy at almost any time, and though the Baptists were not often disturbed in its use, yet sometimes they were compelled to seek refuge in an inconvenient hall, or give up their services altogether. Nor could they ever be assured, long in advance, when these inconveniences

might occur. Though ordinary courtesies were commonly observed, yet any reputable preacher had the right to appoint a service at any time without consulting the Baptists. Both pastor and people knew equally well, that not only the comfort but the prosperity of the church depended largely on their having a house of their own in which to worship. More than one effort had already been made to secure this most desirable object, but all had thus far ended in failure. The church believed they had not, and probably had not, the means for building without incurring a too burdensome debt. The union house was not only not under the control of the church, but was extremely inconvenient for many purposes of church work and service, having an audience room only, to be used for all purposes. *

After long and careful consideration, the church responded that they were not able to comply with the conditions proposed by the

* The old union house stood on the highest spot of land, and in the most central and the best location in the village. The site is now occupied by the New Town Hall, directly in the rear of the Dixon House and the present Baptist church edifice. The building consisted of a square audience room, with galleries on three sides. It was entered from the south by two doors, opening into a vestibule. The pulpit was between the doors, entered from the floor by a short flight of steps. On either side of the pulpit, and not far removed from it, was a very large stove for heating purposes in cold weather. Any one can conceive the discomforts of a preacher subjected to currents of cold air, as belated worshipers entered, supplemented by the heat from the stoves, and obliged to preach through a stratum of heated air diffused between himself and his audience. But many other houses of worship had been constructed on the same plan.

pastor. It appears that about the time this resignation was offered, probably a little previous, the church at Stonington Borough gave Mr. Palmer a call to become their pastor. The records of that church show that on January 27, 1843, that church by vote instructed its pulpit committee to "give Rev. A. G. Palmer a call to come and act as pastor of this people." On February 14, 1843, Mr. Palmer announced to the church that he had accepted a call from the Stonington Church, and made his resignation final, to take effect with the close of March following, thus terminating a pastorate of six years, which had been both prosperous and pleasant to all concerned. It need not be added that the entire community deeply regretted the retirement of Mr. Palmer from among them.

On February 7, 1843, one week before the final announcement of his resignation, transpired an event to which Mr. Palmer always henceforth looked back with interest, and often spoke of with peculiar satisfaction. That was the organization of a branch church which had grown up as the fruits of his ministry, some distance from the village. About three miles down the Paucatuc River, on which Westerly is located, and two miles before reaching its outlet to the ocean between Stonington and Watch Hill, there was a hamlet of perhaps a dozen families of sea-faring men. It was known as the

"Lottery," and later "Lotteryville," on account of some connection at its inception with a lottery venture, a common factor in former times in matters both secular and religious. Here meetings were held from time to time, and a goodly number were converted and united with the church at Westerly. But the distance was too great for the families to attend church with any degree of regularity, especially could not the women and children. It was therefore proposed to organize this company of believers into a "branch church," a common thing among New England Baptists of that and former times; and it must be conceded a wise and prudent provision in given circumstances. The "branch" had the privilege of holding meetings, receiving members, all of whom would by that act be members of the mother church. They were allowed to have the ordinances administered by the pastor, if he could be had, or by others, with the consent of the church. The pastor would also preach for them at stated or convenient times, and the brethren visit and encourage them as opportunity offered. These branch churches sustained a semi-dependent relation to the mother church, until such times as they might be able to care for themselves and support a pastor of their own, then they were "set off" and recognized as independent churches. The records note the fact that the pastor preached an excellent sermon at

the organization of this branch church from 1 Cor. 13 : 11-13. I have more than once heard Dr. Palmer in later years refer to the event as one, the recollection of which gave him great satisfaction. And as the day proved to be very snowy, he spoke of the transaction as a very heroic one, pleasantly alluding to the brave Benaiah, one of David's mighty men and captain of his guard, who not only slew two lion-like men, but "also he went down and slew a lion in a pit in a snowy day." *

It is not my intention to introduce into this memorial personal reminiscences, save as they may illuminate some event of his life, or illustrate some trait of his character. But there is one incident connected with his ministry in Westerly which is vividly recalled as I write. It so happened, how I do not now remember, that I spent a Sunday there, probably in the summer or autumn of 1842, while on a visit to friends during a vacation.† That Sunday was communion

* 1 Chron. 11 : 22. It should, perhaps, be said that this branch church survived for many years, and was a needed and welcome means of grace to the scattered population through all that vicinity. But changes transpired in the conditions of social and business life. The water-carrying trade underwent changes, members died or removed, and subsequently the organization was given up.

† It will be of small interest to the reader to be told that Westerly was my native town, and the home of my childhood, having left it at thirteen years of age; and except an occasional visit and a general acquaintance, knowing comparatively little about it till I became pastor of that church, May 1, 1844, a year after Dr. Palmer closed his pastorate with it. Dur-

day. The church had been blessed with a season of revival. The pastor had been ill; and, if my memory be correct, for some weeks away from home. On this occasion, he preached with unction and great tenderness of feeling. At the communion service, after sermon, a large number of converts were to receive the hand of fellowship. They were ranged in front of the pulpit in one extended line, reaching beyond the old stoves on either side (for the stoves were still standing), from near one door to near the other, probably twenty in number as now remembered. The pastor took his place in front of the pulpit, pale and trembling with emotion. He attempted to speak, but could not; the tears ran down his face; he took his handkerchief from his pocket, pressed it to his eyes, and stood for some moments speechless, struggling with the intensity of his feelings, overcome by a sense of the goodness of God in having given him such evidence that his work and labor of love was not in vain in the Lord. The impression on a large audience was indescribable: more touching and more im-

ing that year, the church had been variously supplied; a considerable part of the time by Rev. Mr. Wakefield, an excellent man, a good preacher, and a faithful pastor. That was my first pastorate, and no succeeding one is more pleasantly or more fondly cherished at this distance of nearly half a century. Westerly then was an unimportant country village, but now its granite quarries have made it famous through the world for the finest gray granite for monuments, statuary, and building purposes anywhere to be found. Besides, its manufactories and general enterprises have greatly enlarged its bounds.

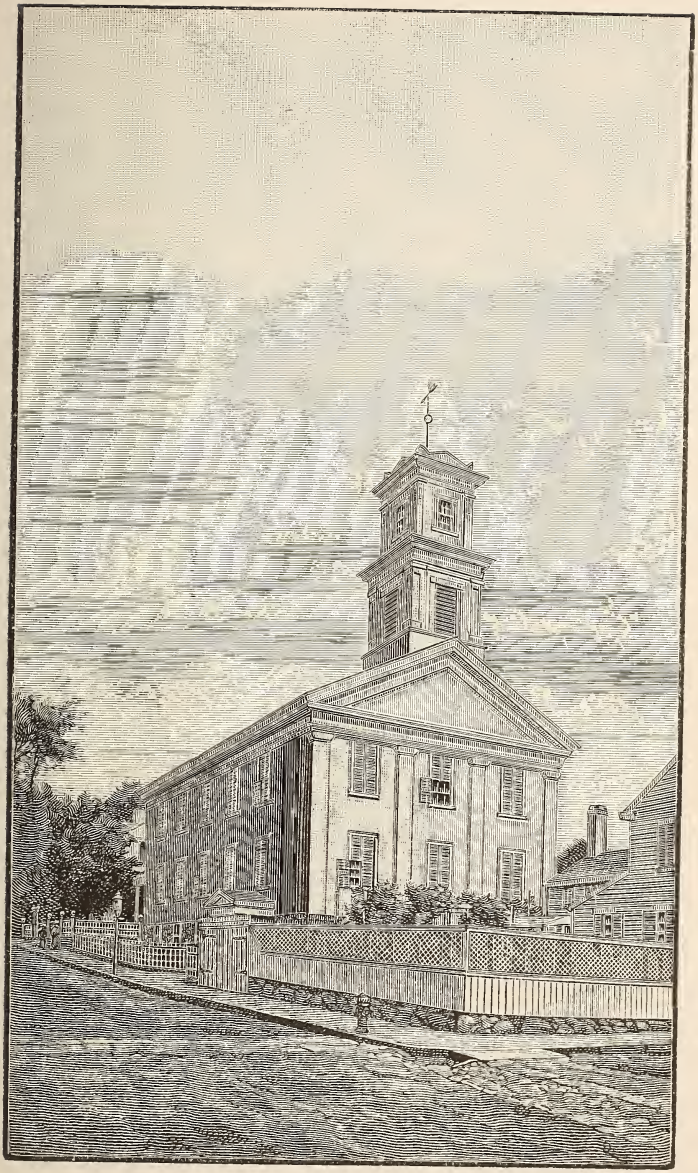
pressive than any words could possibly have been. The scene is before me now as fresh and vivid as at that moment. On me the effect was inexpressible. Never before or since have I been more touched with a sense of the blessedness of the ministerial calling, and the reward of a pastor's work as he sees his labors bearing fruit in the salvation of souls, converts won from the world and sin, joyful in him who loved them and gave himself for them.

It is safe to say that Dr. Palmer looked back from after years to his pastorate in Westerly as perhaps the most fruitful in spiritual blessings of any part of his long and useful life. That in Wakefield, R. I., though much more brief, ranked hardly second in his estimate of its worth in precious fruits. Both he cherished in affectionate memory through all his subsequent years; and they reciprocated fully his cherished recollections.

VII.

His Stonington Pastorate.

The old town of Stonington constitutes the southeastern extremity of the State of Connecticut, lying along the western border of Rhode Island, between which the Paucatuc River flows as the dividing line. On a projecting point of land jutting out into the waters of Long Island Sound, lies the village of Stonington, known as Stonington Borough, formerly and more familiarly called Stonington Point, the most considerable village in New London County, east of the Thames. Stonington was settled about the middle of the seventeenth century, is a port of entry, and has a fine harbor. A century ago it was an important port for whalers and the coastwise trade, and many of the leading families were wealthy for those times. But great changes have transpired. At present it is the southern terminus of the Providence and Stonington Railroad, and the port for the New York, Stonington, and Boston line of steamers. It is five miles southwest from Westerly, and the same distance west, across the bay at the mouth of the Paucatuc, from the now famous summer seashore re-



Old Baptist Church, Stonington, Ct.
Erected in 1834-5.

sort of Watch Hill, standing high above the surf, with its many hotels and cottages looking out upon the broad Atlantic Ocean. It is twelve miles east from New London. The whole scene is one of marvelous marine beauty and attraction, especially in the summer time, when thousands of visitors throng all the region, as a health resort, for rest and pure air. Then the river and bay are whitened with the sails of pleasure craft, and the waters are stirred with the wheels of steamers constantly moving to and fro. Fifteen miles off shore lies Block Island, now also famous as a summer resort, reached daily by excursion steamers and sailing crafts. The coast is a bleak one for winter storms, but in the summer few equal, and none surpass Watch Hill, Stonington, and Westerly, and the surrounding vicinity, for vacation rest and pleasure seeking. It seems proper to make this brief mention of the vicinity in which so large a part of the life of the subject of this memoir was spent, and all of which was so dear to him.

The records of the Stonington Church, which are not continuous in many cases, under date of January 27, 1843, have this entry, "Voted that the trustees be a committee to obtain a pastor." And on the same evening, "Voted that the committee give Rev. A. G. Palmer a call to come and act as our pastor." There is no record of his acceptance of the call, or of any communication

from him. But he did accept the call, and an entry some months later says: "Rev. A. G. Palmer commenced his labors amongst us April 1, 1843." The church had noted the success of his ministry in Westerly, and contemplated his coming to them with great expectations. Nor were they disappointed. The two communities, though near neighbors, were very unlike. This was an old church, fixed in its habits, and not easily moved; that was young, alive, and readily responsive to any appeal. This was composed of and surrounded by the staid, conservative society of an old seaport; that by the wide-awake, active life of a mechanical and manufacturing village, ready to move in any direction which commended itself to their judgment and better feelings. Moreover, the church had experienced various internal hindrances to its prosperity. A very serious case of discipline, which for some years was a source of uneasiness and of some diversity of opinion, diverted and dampened the spiritual energies of the body.

They had good and wise brethren, but they felt the need of a good and wise pastor at the helm to unite their efforts and guide their forces. For six years they had known him and his work at Westerly, and they believed he was the man they needed in their present condition. Nor were they mistaken in their choice. Through all the difficulties of that particular case, which led to

protracted labor, with no small differences of opinion, the calling of a council, and consequent church action—through it all the pastor bore himself with firmness as to principles, but with great kindness as to spirit, and with wisdom and discretion as to the direction of affairs. And his brethren sustained him. The church emerged from the conflict still united and harmonious, and perhaps in a better spiritual condition than for a long time previous.

During the autumn and winter of 1843, his first year in Stonington, there occurred a gracious revival, with which, by a marked providential incident, I chanced to be connected. I was on my way to New York from Rhode Island, where I had been to visit relatives, and came into Stonington by an early evening train, expecting to take the steamer at a later hour. My trunk was put on board, and having secured a berth, I started to make a call on Mr. Palmer, having some two hours before the boat left. I found him at home, surprised by the unexpected visit,—the occasion of which was explained,—but apparently very glad to see me. He said they were holding meetings every night in the lecture room, and there was a good deal of interest among the people. "And now," he added, "you must remain and preach for us to-night." I replied that it was out of the question. My trunk was on the boat, and I must go on. No argument would suffice; and so

earnest and persistent was he, that I consented to remain for that one evening and go on the next. My trunk was taken from the steamer to his house, and I conducted the services for him that evening. Such was the interest, that his persuasions were repeated the next day for another evening, and the result was that for three weeks I remained in his family, preaching for him every evening and once each Sunday. They were weeks of deep spiritual interest to the church, of most profitable experience to myself, and delightful Christian intercourse with himself and his lovely wife. In later years he has often referred to that season of fraternal fellowship and ministerial service as a cherished memory peculiarly pleasant. How many professed conversions and additions to the church there were as the fruit of those meetings, I cannot now tell, and the church records are strangely silent as to the whole affair, as in other similar cases, having no mention of the meetings.

It was in this same autumn, and a few weeks earlier than my visit above mentioned, that the old First Baptist Church in North Stonington, where he was born, converted, baptized, and began his ministry, celebrated its "one hundredth anniversary," with appropriate services. With fitting propriety he was invited to deliver the centennial sermon. The invitation was accepted, and he preached a historical discourse from the

text Deut. 31 : 12, 13. So fitting was the discourse, and so favorably did it impress the people, that a demand was made for its publication. To this demand he yielded, and during my stay in his family he prepared the manuscript for publication, and sent it to the church committee. The subject was the early struggles, trials, and triumphs of the Baptists of Eastern Connecticut. It is a monograph of permanent historical value.*

* The discourse may be found reprinted in this volume.

VIII.

His Great Bereavement.

We come now to consider his first great domestic sorrow, and it is doubtless true to say, the greatest by far of his life,—the death of his lovely and devoted wife. This occurred on March 27, 1844, at the age of twenty-nine, on the seventh anniversary of her wedding day. He loved her passionately; almost idolized her. And she was fully worthy of his high esteem and generous affection. The blow was all the more crushing because it was so sudden. Going out in the afternoon to make pastoral calls, leaving her in apparently perfect health, he returned at evening to find her prostrate with illness, and near to death. She survived but a few hours, leaving the home, which so lately had been without a shadow on its joy, shrouded in the gloom of unutterable grief.* Two bright and beautiful little boys who called her mother, and were too young to realize their loss, were left. One babe had preceded her to the home above.

To the husband, the shock was literally over-

* The physicians, I believe, never did agree as to the immediate cause of her illness and sudden death.

whelming. The stroke chastened and shaded all his subsequent years. True, others have suffered sore bereavement; other homes have been darkened, and other hearts have been smitten and afflicted. But this, as I personally knew the particulars, was altogether a peculiar case.

His heart never fully lost the shadow of that dark hour, nor ceased to taste the bitterness of that bitter cup. Still there was no settled gloom, but the cheering sense of a joyous fellowship which death could not dissolve. No one can mistake the reference in the following extract from one of his poems, entitled "Smitten":

I sit and gaze into the darkness blankly,
For light no sweetness has apart from thee.
And in my locks the night air gathers dankly,
While thus I blindly long thy face to see.

Oh, it were sweet to die if I might find thee,
And kiss as erst thy dear lips o'er and o'er,
And to my heart in long embraces bind thee
Indissolubly mine forevermore.

And thou wilt be among the first to meet me
When my worn feet shall press the golden shore;
On flashing pinions thou wilt haste to greet me,
And kiss me thine, to part no more.

Thank heaven the darkness will not be forever,
E'en now I seem to see the golden dawn,
Whose bright unfoldings death shall shadow never,
While the eternal ages circle on.

And here again, I must make a personal refer-

ence. At the time of her death I was seven miles north, temporarily supplying the Second Church in North Stonington, whose pastor had lately and quite unexpectedly resigned and left. One day I was utterly amazed by the receipt of a letter from Mr. Palmer, announcing the death of his wife, and asking me to come and preach her funeral sermon the next day. No words can express my astonishment, at both the announcement and the request. It seemed but a few days only since I had been in their family, with no thought of death or illness, though it was really three months gone by. And now she was dead, and I was asked to speak at her funeral. It would be like conducting the funeral of a sister. Not yet ordained, I do not recall that I had ever conducted a funeral service. How much more fitting for some older and more experienced man to be chosen! But we were friends, had lately wrought together in gospel service, and he knew that I appreciated her worth. It seemed impossible to comply, and impracticable to refuse, since I could not reach him with a response till too late to secure some one else. There was no telegraph; mails were infrequent; the weather was unfavorable, and the roads were bad. I was compelled to consent. I did yield to the fraternal call, coming as it did, out of great darkness and anguish of heart. I preached the sermon from John 11 : 26: "And whosoever liveth and believeth

in me shall never die." It was a service undertaken with more trepidation than any other I can recall in my whole life, and performed with a more manifest sense of divine assistance than almost any other before or since. And the assurances of mourners and sympathizing friends afterward gave evidence that the Spirit directed the service.

For almost half a century the dust of that saintly young woman reposed in the old village burying ground where it was laid that day. But recently it has been removed to the cemetery, and now reposes side by side with the husband she so fondly loved and so early left, in a beautiful granite tomb, erected by filial affection for them by her first-born son and child. And there in peaceful silence it will remain waiting the angel's voice and the resurrection morning, when the trump shall awake the sleeping dead.*

* The message from Mr. Palmer reached me in the afternoon. While I felt that I could not preach a sermon on such an occasion, yet it was apparently impracticable to decline without perhaps subjecting him to disappointment, and possibly grieve him in the hour of his great sorrow. Nor could I communicate with him except by special messenger. I finally resolved to undertake the service, do the best I could, and leave the result. After supper that evening, at my boarding place, I took my lamp, pen, ink, and paper, and the Bible,—other books I had none,—and went to my room. It was 7 o'clock when I sat down, with my mind utterly empty and desolate with the morrow's task before me. For two hours I prayed and thought and turned the Scriptures, attempting to fix on something. At length a text was chosen, the line of thought gradually opened to view. And there I remained; thought, prayed, and wrote till my discourse was finished at 5 o'clock the next morning. And such a night! What a war of elements! It rained, hailed, snowed, thundered, and lightened through the passing hours. But the hours were not so

Notwithstanding her great timidity of nature, and her shrinking diffidence, Mrs. Palmer was a most efficient helper in the church. Not so much because she was foremost everywhere and leading in everything, but because everybody loved her, and was ready to help do anything she desired to have done. But she did on occasion possess courage for any emergency. The following incident characteristic at once of her diffidence and of her courage is still related by the few living witnesses of it, and repeated by the many who heard it from others. During a time of special religious interest, when nightly meetings were being held, the feeling had reached a point of great intensity, but there was no break, no giving way. Like waters that had risen to the margin of the pool and there stayed, they did not overflow. All felt the pressure, but no one knew what to do. One evening in this condition, she sat with her head bowed down, when suddenly she arose from her seat, stepped out into the aisle, kneeled down and poured out her soul in prayer with such pathos, manifest faith, and strong conviction, that all felt it to be

dreary to me, nor lagging, for I was busy, and did not wish them hastened. After breakfast I hired a horse and gig and drove to Stonington through mud and ice, and preached that sermon, the manuscript of which I still retain in its original form. After the interment, I went to the house to speak a word of hope and cheer to my afflicted brother, and then returned to my temporary home to rest and meditate on the dealing of God with his children. Whom he loves, them he chastens, as a wise but not unkind father. That was almost fifty years ago.

the inspiration of the Spirit. Her natural timidity had disappeared, for she seldom had courage to pray in public. Now she wrestled with the mighty arm and won a gracious victory. It was like an electric shock. The congregation was in tears. The barrier was broken down and the waters overflowed. Strong men, men prominent in the community, arose and asked for prayers. Men came down from the gallery and from the rear of the house, confessing their sins and their need of a Saviour. A glorious work of grace succeeded, and many of the saved were added to the church.

His memory of her personal charms still found expression in verse after years had passed, when he sang in sad undertone to "The Wife of His Youth."

I've stood in halls' where softened light
Threw down from canvas beauty's glance,
All radiant, sparkling, bright,
But powerless yet *my* eye to entrance.
I have not found the faintest shade
Of thy unrivalled loveliness,
Nought of what thee an angel made,
Thy matchless, sweet, subduing grace.

But his muse was not unjust to forget the works of faith and labors of love of the wife of his maturer years, but in tender equity said:

But one there is who fills thy place,
So like thee in her spirit kind,

That what is less in outward grace,
  Is more in fellowship of mind.
I love her, not as I loved thee,
  Though not less tenderly or true;
But differing only as we see
  The morning from the evening dew.

IX.

Lights and Shadows of Pastoral Life.

During the winter of 1849, came up the question of the permanency of the pastoral relation. The custom of the church had been to call the pastor yearly. This was common with churches then, and some still retain the habit of "hiring the pastor yearly." Though they did not probably take that view of it, yet it virtually made the pastorate a hireling service, tending to degrade both the office and the incumbent. Moreover, it gave yearly occasion, as the matter came up, for any disaffected cranks to agitate the question of a change of pastors. The records do not show that such agitation in this case did occur. But the very possibility of such a result would be painful to a sensitive nature, and any pastor would wish to be relieved from such a liability. Mr. Palmer saw the objections and proposed a change; a change equally just to pastor and people; that should secure all the advantages and avoid the difficulties. He drew up "a plan of settlement," and presented it to the church for consideration. The plan was not spread upon the minutes, and cannot here be

specially explained. The meeting is stated to have been a small one, and his plan was not accepted. Then he offered his resignation.

As a rule it is not a wise thing for a pastor to offer his resignation unless he means to persist in it. To attempt to coerce a church, or endeavor to bring them to terms by resigning, as it will probably be interpreted, does not usually succeed. Very likely the resignation may be accepted when not expected or desired. But we do not know all the circumstances in this case, and doubtless Mr. Palmer was fully justified in his action. He was not rash, impetuous, and inconsiderate; but careful, conscientious, and honorable in all his proceedings. The church as a body evidently justified his course. His resignation aroused them to the importance of the subject, and at a subsequent and much larger meeting, the church voted not to accept his resignation, and presented "a plan of settlement" entirely satisfactory to him. As to salary, with his usual generosity he left that entirely with the church to determine. The discussion of the subject, so far as the minutes give any light, shows his clear comprehension of the true relations sustained between pastor and people, the rights of each, and the obligations of both.

The church had never held a numerous membership, but it was very compact and, according to its method of work, effective. But churches

in staid and conservative communities are usually not very aggressive. In their church life they partook of the general tone and spirit of society about them. Various clerks kept, or neglected to keep, the records, and no consistent or continuous history of its progress can be gathered from them. For many years there appear but two entries giving statistical facts. The letter to the Association for 1850, reports 299 members, with 126 scholars in the Sunday-school. The next year, 1851, there were 302 members, with 166 pupils in the Sunday-school. These meagre facts leave us in ignorance of many things we should like to know. It is much to be regretted that church clerks do not note in their records every important fact which transpires in their history, so that those who come after them can gain an accurate and consistent idea of their life and progress from year to year. It is known, however, though the particulars are not at hand, that during these years various revivals were enjoyed, the church was edified and established in the faith, discipline was maintained, and their influence in the community was widened and deepened.

April 12, 1852, Mr. Palmer offered his resignation, to accept a call he had received from the First Baptist Church in Syracuse, New York. The church accepted the resignation with regrets, and with the letters granted to himself and wife, they sent an official letter to the Syracuse Church,

commending him in the most affectionate and positive terms. We are not informed as to the precise time at which his pastorate closed and that in Syracuse began. It was, however, sometime during the spring or early summer of 1852, and terminated a pastorate of nine years in Stonington. As a token of the affectionate regard in which he was held, on the evening in which he left for his new home, a committee from the church met him at the boat, and presented him with a valuable gold watch, expressing for him their affectionate regard, and their sorrow at his leaving. That watch he carried till his death, and left as an heirloom to his daughter. And a still more emphatic expression of their interest in him and their desire for his services, was the fact that at the end of one year they sent him an urgent and unanimous call to return to Stonington. This call, however, he felt compelled at the time to decline, as he did not feel that his mission at Syracuse was fully accomplished.

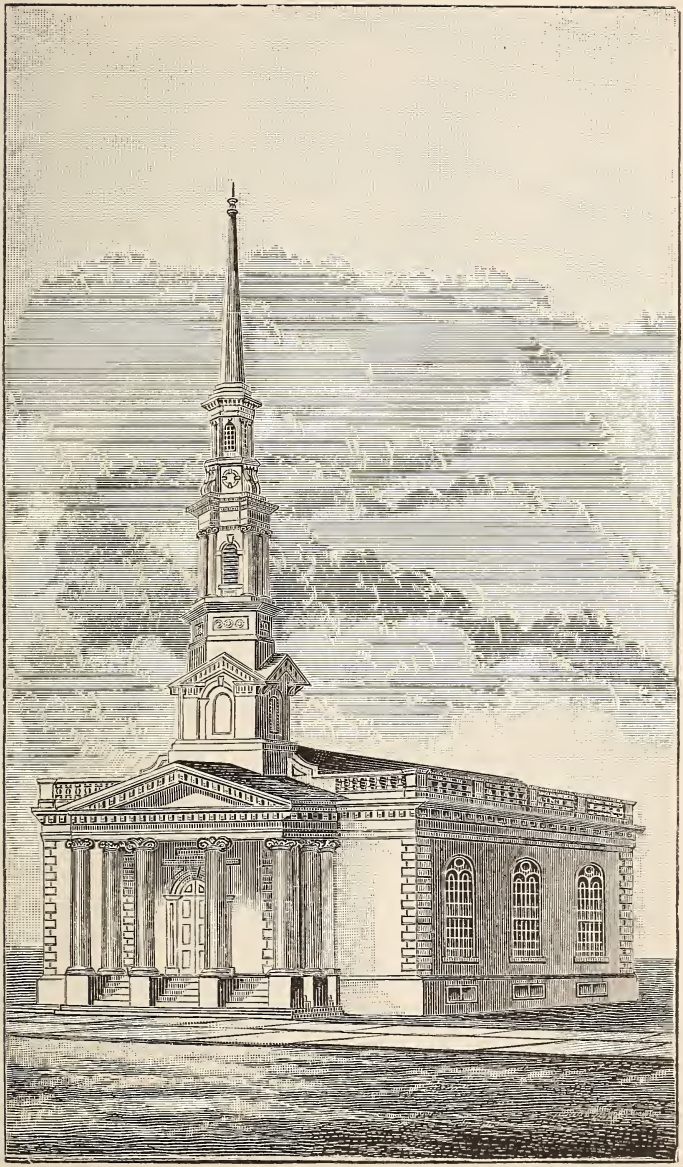
During the year 1846, Mr. Palmer was married to Miss Amelia Wells, daughter of Henry and Lucy P. Wells, of Woodstock, Connecticut. His home, and his own sense of loneliness, demanded the care and sympathy of a wife, and the two little children needed the care and love of a mother. In all of this, his choice was a peculiarly fortunate one. No one could better have

cared for himself and his home. A competent and faithful manager of his household; a wise and prudent counsellor; a patient, affectionate, and discreet mother, not only to her own children, but to those committed to her trust from the sainted dead; a wise and safe adviser and an efficient helper in church affairs; she well deserved the confidence he reposed in her, and the commendations she received from the churches they served together for forty-five years. She still survives, though in frail health, to mourn his loss, but to be tenderly cared for by the children she has reared and blessed. It was largely on account of the precarious state of her health that they left Stonington, her physician declaring that nothing but an entire change of air would save her life.

X

His Pastorate at Syracuse.

His pastorate at Syracuse began hopefully, if not altogether auspiciously, and continued between two and three years. It was as fruitful of good as could have been anticipated with the condition of affairs as they existed in the church. They had for a considerable length of time been suffering from divisions and unrest, which marred their peace, and fatally hindered their prosperity. A former pastor, still a resident and an active member, had lost the confidence of a large part of the congregation and community, though still retaining as adherents a considerable party in the church. This was a legacy from the past which the new pastor accepted when entering upon his work there. The difficulty he managed with great prudence and good judgment, but the evil became more inveterate as the time passed. A similar trial confronted him upon entering upon his work at Stonington. In that case, however, after protracted labor, vexation, and care, a successful and harmonious termination was reached, to the satisfaction of all concerned. This case was more inveterate. In his ministry



First Baptist Church, Syracuse, N. Y.

they had hoped for an antidote, but the disease had too firm a hold. Though emphatically a peacemaker, yet he was not able to still the turbulent waters, and harmony was not so far restored as to give his ministry free course. He was not personally involved in the conflicts, but seeking to deal justly, to love mercy, and to vindicate the right. A partisan spirit would naturally complain, if it could be surmised that the pastor favored one side more than the other.

On a sensitive nature like his, these things chafed and disturbed, if they did not destroy his peace of mind and his expectation of usefulness. The spiritual element in the church stood faithfully by him, but they worked against great odds, and made but little headway. It would be neither wise nor useful, at this distance of time, to go into details concerning a case so painful in many of its aspects. Most of the actors have passed beyond the bounds of time, and but few live to recall the events of forty years ago. For years that church had suffered, as many other churches have suffered from similar causes, was dwarfed if not paralyzed, by those unhappy conflicts. But in more recent times these elements of evil have been eliminated, and the church once more united has taken on new strength and spiritual life.

As to the details of his ministry there, little

information can now be obtained. Most of the then active members have died. The church edifice subsequently burned down, and the church records, from which facts might have been obtained, perished with the building. One of his sons, then quite young, but who remembers the main circumstances, says "that pastorate was to my father full of trials." The following statement, received from one of the surviving members, is all I have been able to obtain as to that chapter in his life.

"The book of church records during Brother Palmer's pastorate is supposed to have been burned with the building not long after; and most of the members then interested have passed away. But enough remain to give a fair statement of the matter. In one sense, the period of his work here was personally an unfortunate one. The church weighed down with a heavy debt and anxiety consequent upon the erection of the new building, was hardly in a condition for aggressive spiritual growth. But testimony prevails to the pastor's fidelity, with rare kindness of heart, and sympathy with the lowly; and also with a daily walk, carrying to others a conviction of the truths he preached, with clearness and power. And on the whole his pulpit efforts seemed the crowning gift. A letter of his, read on the occasion of the church's jubilee, February 17, 1870, attests his gratification

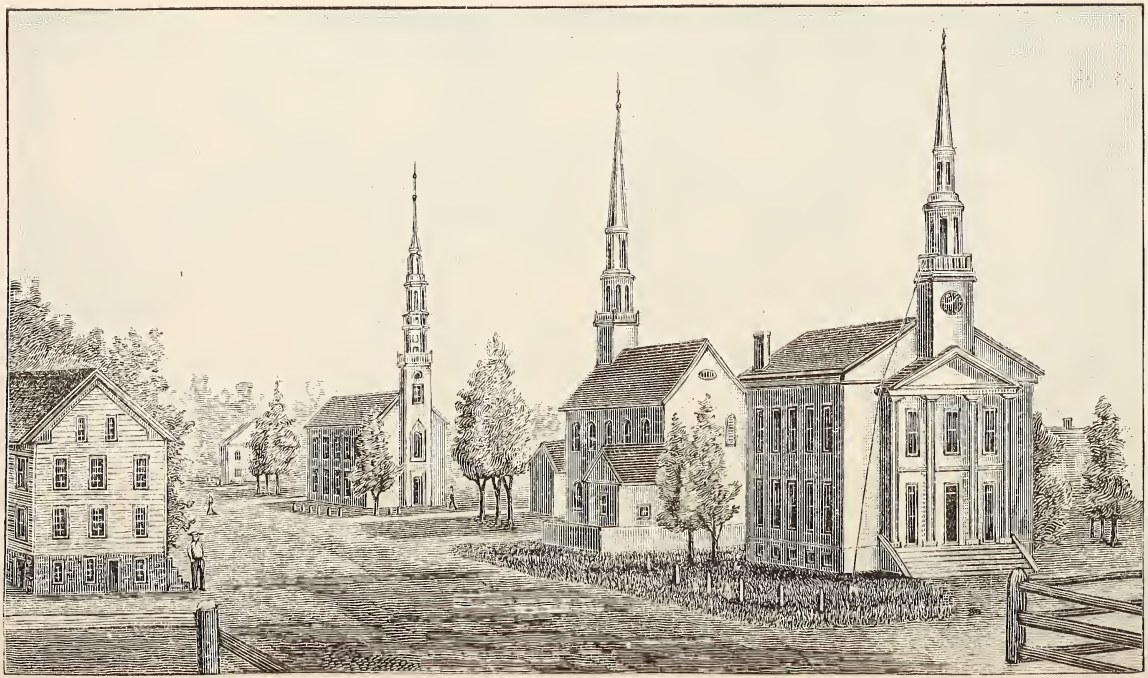
at having been able to preach Christ and him crucified to this people, and attests to their faithfulness.*

No data seem obtainable by which further to judge of his work, and the church's progress during that pastorate. He never seemed to refer to it as one of the bright periods of his ministry. We are not however to infer that either in this, or any other similar case, a ministry is not useful or fruitful, because we cannot see the harvest ripen. The gospel faithfully proclaimed is never without some gracious effect. The word cannot return void. We do not always know the divine purpose it is meant to accomplish. He whose message it is, will make it effectual to the end he intends it shall accomplish. He does not hold his servants responsible for the harvest, but only for the faithful seed-sowing. He alone can give the increase. Let the servant be true and faithful to do his work as directed, and the Spirit will do his work, when and how he please.

Tried in spirit and discouraged with the prospect and the lack of promise, he resigned in the spring or early summer of 1855, and spent the

* Deacon N. Gilbert, from whom the above letter was received, and who also kindly furnished the cut of the old church edifice, says he may be excused for feeling a deep interest in any and every thing pertaining to the church, since his father, Rev. J. N. Gilbert, was its first settled pastor, serving it in the ministry of the word nearly ten years, from May, 1823, to July, 1832, when he fell a victim to the cholera, during its first visit to this country. A brother, Mr. M. Gilbert, served the church many years as clerk.

summer mostly at Woodstock, Conn., preaching as Providence opened the door. These to him were dark days, causing great trial of spirit. But the Lord was working with him, both to will and to do of his good pleasure.



First Baptist Church, Bridgeport, Ct.
The Centre Church is the Baptist Church.

XI.

His Pastorate in Bridgeport.

It was on September 9, 1855, that the First Baptist Church in Bridgeport, Conn., after long and ineffectual efforts to secure a pastor, voted a call to Rev. A. G. Palmer. The call was accepted, and he entered on his work in the new field of labor the following month.

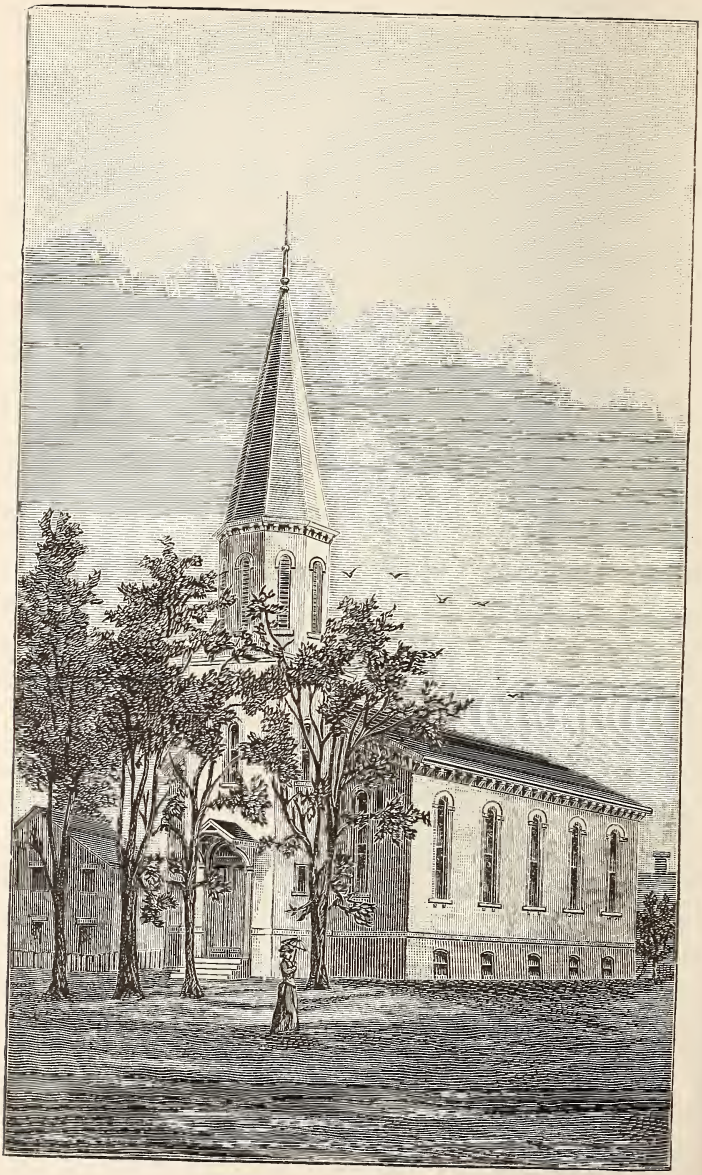
This new field took Mr. Palmer back to his native State, but to a very different condition of social and religious life from that to which he had formerly been accustomed. The church was not the most inviting, save as an opportunity for doing good. It had been without a pastor for more than a year, and from an examination of their records, the difficulties in the way of harmony in securing one for a long time appeared almost insurmountable. The Rev. William Reid had been their pastor for nine years.* He was a man of very positive character, of marked ability as a manager of affairs, and a strong preacher.

* Mr. Reid has passed away within the past two months over eighty years of age, dying at his house in Brooklyn, where he had resided for several years, and since his retirement from the pastorate. His bodily health and mental faculties had remained good until his last and somewhat brief illness.

By some means, not now recalled, the church had fallen into a state neither pleasant nor hopeful.

And yet the new pastor entered upon his work at least trustfully, although he knew that the condition of the church was most discouraging. Strong party feeling prevailed, and a want of harmony and united Christian action made the outlook anything but cheering. But relying on the gospel of Christ which is the power of God, and with dependence on the Holy Spirit, he entered upon his accepted service, hoping for success. But, like many other faithful and good men, he found the past had bequeathed to him a heritage of discontent and vexation which threatened to make fruitless his best endeavors. It was sowing among thorns. And not many months passed before he began to think that if the Lord had indeed sent him there, it was for a brief service only, and that he would open another door for him before a long time had passed.

It was in the latter part of August, or early in September, 1857, that the First Baptist Church in South Kingston (Wakefield), R. I., extended to him a call to become their pastor. Believing this to be a call of Providence, and an answer to his anxious doubts as to his present work, he presented his resignation of the pastorate, at a special meeting held September 27, 1857. This was accepted, and he began his work in Wakefield with the beginning of the following month.



First Baptist Church, Wakefield, R. I.

XII.

His Pastorate at Wakefield.

Wakefield is one of the many manufacturing villages in the southwestern part of Rhode Island. It lies not on, but near the Atlantic coast, and the well-famed Narragansett Bay. Peace Dale and Rocky Brook are other villages in the near vicinity, and the now fashionable summer resort of Narragansett Pier, on the shore open to the ocean, is but a couple of miles away. The whole region, formerly known as the "Narragansett Country," is romantic and historic as well. The folk-lore of all that region is rich in legends of Colonial and Revolutionary times, with traditions, myths, and weird tales of Indian life, and the presence of the British soldiery. A couple of miles away to the northeast is the once famous Tower Hill, from whose lofty summit, looking seaward and landward, lies a vast extent of land and water reaching beyond the range of the observer's vision. The ocean, the bay, and the islands that fleck it, with the bold headlands, whose rocky ramparts court while they repel the fury of the angry sea, with Point Judith, the most prominent and, to the im-

periled mariner driven by fierce gales upon a lee shore, the most dangerous of them all. On this lofty outlook was the watch-tower from which the sentinels in times of war or threatening danger could detect the approach of enemies when afar off, whether by sea or land. The lofty outlook still remains, but no threatening peril now disturbs these quiet scenes, either by day or night. The wide, extended view is even more picturesque than in the past, but the activities of busy life have transplaced the scenes of two centuries ago, when Baptists were found scattered among these early settlers. The farmer still cultivates the scanty soil, but the sound of the shuttle and the spindle make familiar music to hundreds of wage earners. The railway has invaded the rural quiet of the neighborhood, and the tourist and the pleasure seekers fill the summer months with their presence. The sea appears as busy as the land with all kinds of sailing crafts, and the swiftly gliding steamers, presenting ever varying and attractive scenes of marine beauty.

The first Baptist church constituted in South Kingston was formed about 1680. And it is known that one existed in this part of the town as early as 1720, but for many years its condition was doubtful and its progress slow. Few data can now be obtained by which to learn its history. Indeed, it was not till 1781 that the present church took definite and orderly shape. The

Centennial was observed with appropriate services, extending through four days, May 13–16, 1881.* This whole community was predisposed to Baptist sentiments, and for many years no other church attempted an existence in this vicinity, save a small society of Quakers, who long maintained worship in a plain, square building, with its two doors of entrance—one for males and one for females, according to the custom—quiet and unpretentious in its whole appearance, as they were, and still are, accustomed to build. This was located on the main road, a short distance from where the Baptist church has long stood; which building was as plain and unattractive as that of their quiet and orderly neighbors. This church for nearly half a century of its history had no house of worship, but held its meetings in private dwellings. Then it succeeded in the erection of one as plain and unpretentious as that of the Quakers. But it witnessed and was

* It may be of small interest to the reader to know that into the fellowship of this church this writer was baptized by the able and honored pastor, Rev. Flavil Shurtlef, Nov. 16, 1834. From the same church, some years later, Feb. 3, 1838, he received his license to preach the gospel. By them he was honored with an invitation to preach their Centennial sermon, Sunday morning, May 15, 1881. On this occasion Dr. Palmer was also an invited guest, and read a poem prepared for the occasion, and preached on the Monday evening following. Various other brethren participated in the services of the occasion, which continued through four days, and were exceedingly interesting, the proceedings being subsequently published in attractive form. At that time, the Rev. Wm. H. Pendleton was the esteemed and efficient pastor. He is still living and doing effective service in the ministry in the State of California.

honored by some powerful revivals. In 1852, the present house, more commodious and attractive, was erected and dedicated December 15. The church had enjoyed the ministry of some able and godly men as pastors. In its earlier history the pastorates were for the most part protracted; during its later history they have generally been very brief.

The call so harmoniously extended to Mr. Palmer by the church was accepted, and he entered upon the new pastorate October 1, 1857, and remained with them till April 1, 1861, a period of three and one-half years. That this step was of divine direction he had abundant reason to believe, for the seal of divine approbation was set upon his work from the beginning. A revival almost at the commencement began in one of the out-stations, and soon extended over the whole field of the church's influence. Perhaps no three and one-half years of his ministry bore more signal tokens of the favor of God, and the power of the Spirit and the Word, than those of his Wakefield pastorate. He was accustomed in after years to refer to this period of his work with peculiar satisfaction, as perhaps the most marked in his ministry. It is with pleasure I give the following communication from an old personal friend, one who was a prominent member of the church at the time, and actively engaged in securing his services as pastor, and as actively

engaged in supporting him in his ministry during his pastorate.*

Rev. E. T. Hiscox, D. D. *Dear Brother:* In reply to your request for some recollections of the pastorate of Dr. A. G. Palmer in Wakefield, I send you the following notes, hoping they may serve your purpose.

About August, 1857, as a committee of the First Baptist Church, South Kingstown, Rhode Island, I attended the ordination of William Fitz, at the First Baptist Church, Westerly, Rhode Island, hoping to obtain some information in regard to securing a pastor for our church. There I was introduced to Rev. A. G. Palmer, of Bridgeport, Connecticut, who was contemplating a removal. He consented to come and preach for us in about two weeks. At the time named he and his wife came and put up with me. His preaching was so acceptable that the church gave him a unanimous call, at a salary of one thousand dollars, to commence his labors the first of October. He agreed to come again in two weeks to preach. In the mean time, the great financial crash of 1857 was upon us. When he came the second time he had great fears that the church would not be able to raise the salary. I told him if he would come I would personally guarantee his salary for six months. He came and commenced his pastorate, October 1, 1857, and remained until April 1, 1861, three years and six months.

Besides the regular services of the church we had some cottage meetings, some at Wakefield and some at Peace Dale. I think it was about the first of December, when one

* D. M. C. Stedman, Esq. Mr. Stedman was one of the most active and prominent members of the church, and one of the most prominent citizens of the community as well. For many years he was cashier of the Wakefield Bank. His membership in the church must date back nearly, if not quite, fifty years. He still resides there in an honored old age, having long since retired from active business, but still an interested and active worshiper with the people of God, and deeply concerned in the welfare of that church.

was appointed at what was known as Brown's School House, No. 9, Backside. The evening was quite cold and stormy. He had some doubts about going at all, but concluded to keep his appointment. When near the place he met some coming away, and said to them, "There is no meeting." "Yes," they said, "the house is so full we cannot get in." He went on, and when he entered the house he said it seemed as if the place was filled with the Holy Spirit. He told me that it was no effort to preach. The whole congregation was melted down, and all with one accord confessed their sins and glorified God.

From that evening the work spread over all the eastern part of the town, Wakefield, Peace Dale, Narragansett Pier, Point Judith, and Backside. The meetings were held nearly every evening away from the church, except Sunday evenings. At the dining room in the boarding-house, Peace Dale; at Taylor's hotel dining room, Narragansett Pier; at J. C. Tucker's, the upper and lower school houses, Point Judith; and at No. 9 and 10 school houses, Backside. All the places were crowded, and sometimes even on cold nights there would be nearly as many outside the school houses as could get in; with the windows open they would stand all the evening. The Holy Spirit seemed to pervade the entire neighborhood, while Bro. Palmer appeared specially endowed from on high. Every sermon, prayer, and song made an abiding impression on the people, and many were, I think, truly converted. There were added to our church about sixty. Quite a number were added to the Second Church, and several to the Congregational Church, Peace Dale. Sometimes there was such a pressure we were obliged to have two meetings the same evening. I remember very well one night Bro. Palmer went to Peace Dale, and sent me to take charge of the meeting at No. 10 school house, Backside. I shall never forget the mighty power of God in that meeting, when three of the most substantial farmers of that neighborhood, men of influence, at least forty years old, arose

and spoke for the first time in a religious meeting, confessing their sins and asking the prayers of Christians. All very soon met with a change of heart, and subsequently became pillars in the church—one a deacon. One still remains. The meetings were continued all winter. A greater part of the time noon-day prayer meetings were held in Wakefield.

Another scene comes before me so vividly, showing the extent and the deep influence of his preaching and the working of the Holy Spirit in the community, that I will relate it. At the closs of the meeting Friday evening, about the last of March, one of the brethren from Peace Dale said to me that there were some girls in the mill who wished me to come alone to the boarding-house Saturday afternoon at four o'clock. I was there a few minutes before time. When the factory stopped at four, nineteen young women came directly from the mill to the room. When I saw so many come in, all so deeply serious and anxious, I said within myself. "What can I do? O Lord, help me!" I said something to each of them, drawing out their feelings, and had a season of prayer. Nearly all prayed vocally, confessing their sins and pleading for pardon. Some found peace there, and all were subsequently converted and identified themselves with Christians. Brother Palmer has always told me—and I think the last time I saw him—that his ministry here was the brightest spot in all his life work. And it well might be so, for I think he never preached as well before or since. He was then mature and ripe, with entire dependence on the Holy Spirit's power to save souls, and preached from a full heart the plain, simple truths of the gospel direct to the people. Subsequently, he seemed to aspire to a higher intellectual standard of preaching, presumably to reach a more cultivated class of hearers. He preached the associational sermon in 1861, in Wickford. It was a wonderful sermon; all praised it. I remember while we were riding home together of saying to him: "Bro. Palmer, you are pruning and condensing your sermons too much. Condensed food is not so

easily digested as that of a more crude nature. What the people want is plain, simple truth, that they understand and can comprehend, presented to them in their own language."

He was very prominent in the formation of the Narragansett Baptist Association, which had been for some time in contemplation. At an informal meeting of several pastors of the south part of the State, composing the State Convention, held April 24, 1860, he was chosen chairman of a committee to invite all the churches south of the latitude of East Greenwich to meet and deliberate upon the expediency of forming an Association in the south part of the State. They were invited to appoint their pastor and one or more delegates to meet with the Second Baptist Church, Richmond, June 19, 1860. The meeting convened accordingly June 19, 1860, at 9 o'clock, A. M., and was called to order by Rev. Henry Jackson, D. D., pastor of the Central Baptist Church, Newport. Rev. Samuel Adlam, pastor of First Baptist Church, Newport, was chosen moderator, and D. M. C. Stedman, Clerk. Bro. Palmer preached at 11 o'clock. He was appointed chairman of four of the committees on organization, and also to write the circular letter to the first session of the Association. At the next session of the body he preached the associational sermon, already referred to.

Our church, during his pastorate in 1858, reached the highest number of members ever reported to the Association. The church also obtained its present Charter of Incorporation, which embraces only its spiritual membership. Perhaps he accomplished as much real and substantial work during this pastorate as for any three and one-half years of his long and successful ministry. He has always been esteemed here very highly, and the very few remaining older members remember him with the most affectionate regard. In 1858–9 he was practically editor of the "South County Journal," afterward and now the "Narragansett Times."

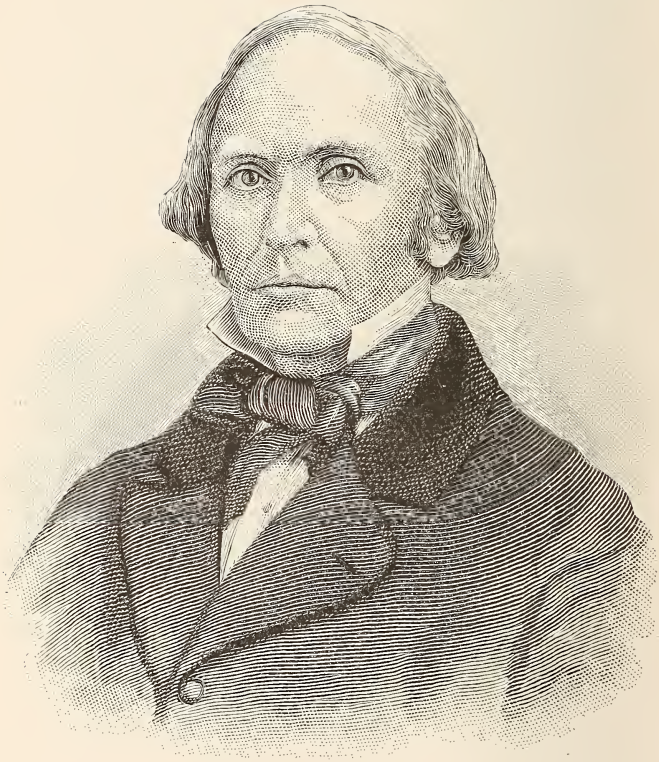
Your friend and brother, D. M. C. STEDMAN.

WAKEFIELD, R. I., December 4, 1891.

Early in 1861, the church in Stonington, after various pastoral changes and much unrest, and with no small discouragement as to both their temporal and spiritual concerns, extended to Mr. Palmer a call to return and resume the pastoral charge. It can well be seen that such a call in the circumstances would appeal powerfully both to his heart and his judgment. And at the same time, to leave a field to which he had become strongly attached, and where his labors had received abundant tokens of the divine favor, even from the beginning, would require great searchings of heart and no small struggle. His present salary was larger than that which in their depressed condition the church at Stonington could offer him. Moreover, his present charge was in a prosperous condition, with every promise of continued and enlarged usefulness, and was united in wishing him to remain; while the church which sought his return was in a depressed and discouraged state, both financially and spiritually. And further, it may be said, the church at Stonington, his old home, and for which he had not ceased to cherish the most affectionate remembrance, believed him to be the only man on whom they could unite, and who could unite them, and successfully lead them on to retrieve their impaired fortunes. He was written to and visited by members, and importuned to return and take up what they claimed

was his unfinished work in his old field. It would be going back to his native State, though not indeed to his native town. It would be placing him again in the midst of old friends, both in the church, the community, and the ministry of the surrounding country. And so after due deliberation he decided to accept the call so heartily given.

Nor does it appear that he had any occasion to regret the step he took, or to feel that he had been mistaken in his decision. Accordingly he offered his resignation, which was reluctantly accepted, and his pastorate in Wakefield terminated April 1, 1861. His name is still honored through all that town, and his memory is revered and cherished by all who live to remember him as their former pastor and friend.



Albert G. Palmer, D. D.
At the Age of Fifty-five Years.

XIII.

Final Pastorate at Stonington.

The call extended to him was voted January 7, 1861, but their church records make no mention, strange to say, of any further communications with him, of any reply from him, of the acceptance of the call, or any reference to the time when he began his ministry. But as he closed his pastorate in Wakefield, April 1, 1861, and as there is a minute of his presiding at a business church meeting in Stonington, May 27, 1861, we may naturally infer that his pastorate commenced May 1, 1861. And yet a manuscript history of the church for this period states that "in February, 1861, we find the Rev. Mr. Palmer again assuming the pastoral relation broken nine years before." The date here given must be a mistaken one, as he did not leave Wakefield till April 1, 1861.

His former ministry in Stonington extended over a period of nine years. And nine years more had passed since he left the place, occupied by his three pastorates, in Syracuse, Bridgeport, and Wakefield. He was now forty-eight years old, in the maturity and strength of a vigorous

manhood, and in the flush and richness of a Christian and ministerial experience. It was twenty-seven years since his ordination. He came back to his old home, to meet old friends and to make new ones, to assume responsibilities both old and new. He came back to begin a thirty years' work, that should end only with his life, probably without in the least dreaming of what was before him, except that he should be faithful in the ministry committed to him, and abide whatever results it might bring, until the Master should call him elsewhere to labor, or above to rest. The call finally came from *above*, to rest.

During the nine years of his absence the fortunes of the church had been varied, but on the whole, not prosperous. Several pastors had ministered to them, but no great amount of success had attended their labors. And when he returned, the church was not so strong as to either temporal or spiritual concerns, as when he left them nine years before. Their lost strength and unity however, under his fostering care, were subsequently restored.

It would, of course, be impracticable to follow, in its minute detail, the course of the thirty years' ministry, as it transpired in actual history, or as it reproduces itself in the memory of those who lived it through with him, who was the chief actor in, and the chief maker of that history. But it

will be consistent with the plan of this memorial to note some prominent features, some marked incidents, as they occurred from time to time along the line of march. For that thirty years, almost the life-time of a generation, was not a monotonous dead level, but was marked by all the variety of trials and of triumphs, of sorrow and of joy, incident to human experience, both in his own personal and domestic history, and in that of his church, and the community of which himself and family constituted so important a part.

THE MINISTRY OF REVIVALS.

The church through its entire history had been what is called "a revival church." It had experienced from time to time seasons of special religious awakening and enlargement. Indeed, this condition of church life prevailed through Eastern Connecticut and Rhode Island in a special manner. With such a history, and such experiences often repeated, it is but natural that churches should come to rely more on periodical, or occasional reviving and upbuilding, than on steady growth by the use of divinely appointed means, made effectual by the Spirit's power. And yet special revivals must not be depreciated. They are the conditions of the church's growth, and of its very life. They are the conditions of the enlargement of the kingdom of God in the world. Revivals reanimate the languid graces

of the saints, and arouse the apathetic and slumbering church, renewing their spiritual life, while they multiply converts to righteousness. The churches indeed should not wait for special times, but remain in a constant attitude of prayer, "O Lord, revive thy work"; and in a constant attitude of active preparation, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight," bringing "all the tithes into his storehouse"; and then receive with thanksgiving the revival, whenever the Spirit in his sovereign power sees fit to give it.

At various times most gracious outpourings of the Spirit were experienced, and the church quickened and enlarged. During the winter of 1865 and the spring of 1866, a very powerful revival was experienced. The church records make no mention of this gracious work. From incidental sources we learn that *fifty* were added to the church, not a few of whom, in after years became pillars in the temple. It was probably in this revival that special note was taken of the conversion of Mrs. Palmer's entire and very large Bible class, which she had long taught under great discouragement. But though the time of sowing and of waiting had been long and weary, the time of reaping came at length. In June following the church reported to the Association a membership of three hundred and ninety-two.

In the spring of 1868, after a season of special meetings, there were added thirty converts. Dur-

ing the winter 1871–2, Rev. A. P. Graves assisted the pastor during a season of evangelistic services, the result of which was the addition of twenty by baptism, besides a very manifest quickening of the church. During the winter of 1878–9, extra meetings were held, conducted by Rev. S. H. Pratt, and as a result the church was much revived and thirty were added by baptism. During the winter of 1883, Rev. Mr. Dickinson assisted the pastor in special services, and eleven were added by baptism. In the spring of 1884, there was a season of extra interest, when I think the pastor conducted meetings without other help, and twenty-five new converts were baptized. And so late as in the spring of 1887, as the result of special endeavors, during which the Rev. Mr. Piddock assisted the pastor, twenty-four were baptized into the fellowship of the church. It must not be understood that no additions were made to the church save such as came into its fellowship during these times of special effort. Single accessions, and from time to time, the few as well as the many conversions and additions took places. As with other churches, some among the most valuable of their members were gathered in during times of prevailing spiritual dearth and decline. The Spirit works according to his own sovereign good pleasure when and as he pleases, confined to no persons and to no methods, but using such as may seem to him

good. The pastor kept faithfully at work, and his labors were blessed. The ingathering, when the harvest did come, was made possible chiefly by the preparation previously made through his faithful seed-sowing, watering, waiting, and watching.

Nearly all of our New England Baptist churches, to speak of no others, were born in, and their infancy, if not their maturity, nourished by revivals. Whatever mistakes, or even abuses, may at any time have been connected with them, it would be rank arrogance, and as rank ingratitude, to attempt to discredit these works of the right hand of the Most High, these seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord. During the two decades, from 1840 to 1860, New London county was swept by floods of living waters in the triumphs of the gospel. Not a few unjustifiable extravagancies were no doubt at times witnessed during the many and sweeping revivals which occurred in cases where these movements were conducted by well-meaning, but incautious and ill-balanced men.

Dr. Palmer was often heard in later years to lament the lack of revival power in the churches and in himself. His preaching, he would say, while it might have been abler, seemed to himself to lack the unction which formerly convicted the consciences and moved the hearts of his hearers. It was not as it was in his earlier

days. Many of his brethren in the ministry have felt and deplored the same want. How often he had expressed the desire to witness and take part in another gracious revival! But a few months before his death he expressed to me the desire that we might go once more to the old church on the hill, where he began his ministry, and hold some meetings. Spoke with the enthusiasm of youth of the improved house of worship there, and how the prospects of the church seemed brightening. And only a few weeks before his final illness, he wrote me requesting that I would come down, spend a week with him in nightly meetings, and see if the Lord would not hear prayer and revive his work. I did go on and spend a Sunday with him, relieving him by occupying the pulpit, morning and evening, in the new and beautiful house then recently dedicated. But the conditions were most unfavorable for any special work. It was easy also to see that his strength was unequal to such a service. It was the last time I saw him alive. He preached a few sermons after that, but the wheel was broken at the cistern, and he ceased from his labors and entered into rest.

A DESERVED HONOR CONFERRED.

In the summer of 1862, he received the honorary degree of "Doctor in Divinity," from Madison University, in the State of New York,

and never did they confer that honor more worthily. It is said the president remarked, in announcing the name, that the university was as much honored in conferring, as he was in receiving the title bestowed. He was eminently learned in theological science, and his theology was strictly biblical, and not that of the schools, the standards, or the creeds, though with these was he familiar. He never sought notoriety; he did not push himself into notice; he was not much in the eyes of the great, noisy, busy public; he did not covet newspaper fame, and when it was bestowed, it did not elate him. His modesty kept him, perhaps, too much in retirement, but all who came in contact with him received decided impressions of his ability and his worth. While he would not seek even recognition, like every other man, he was gratified by any expression of kindly favor which his friends might give.

HIS GENERAL HEALTH.

Dr. Palmer was by no means a strong, robust man, and yet for the most part through life, he had enjoyed a good degree of health. With a nervous, bilious temperament, he inclined to intensity of mental action, with great vigor and force of physical activity. This had a tendency to exhaust his vital forces, and great prostration was liable to follow. He began his ministry with a somewhat enfeebled constitution, but subse-

quently his health became established. Several times during his ministry his work was temporarily interrupted by nervous prostration. But he possessed great rallying powers, and after a brief period of rest, he was at his work again as vigorously as ever. He did not take regular vacations as his brethren in the ministry were accustomed to do. And when taken they were not protracted. At one time, a slight attack of facial paralysis quite alarmed his family, and caused great anxiety in the church. He himself began to think it possible his active usefulness might be near its end. But after a period of rest, his health seemed quite restored. Some years later, a second similar attack was experienced, but not as severe, and from its effects he speedily recovered, and no further return was ever experienced. For the last twenty years his health had probably been as good, and his powers of endurance as great, as during any period of his life,—certainly up to within a comparatively short time before it closed. With the natural and inevitable decay of the vital forces which comes with increasing years, his mental and physical faculties remained in healthful activity till near the close of his life,—a life which had been a very active one,—and so continued to the end. He died in the pastorate, as he had wished, and preached but three weeks before the end finally came. That sermon was

said by those who heard it to be a very remarkable one for pathos and power, and has been often referred to by the hearers. It had the effect to bring one, at least, to give himself wholly to Christ and the church, according to his own statement. He was subsequently baptized and admitted to the church. The text of that discourse was, "Mark the perfect man and behold the upright: for the end of that man is peace." A fitting epitaph for the preacher, so soon to lay down his ministry. No manuscript of the discourse can be found, and whether it was wholly extemporaneous is not now known. Nor can any one recall more than a general impression, with some of the particular utterances it contained. No one at the time supposed it would prove his last appeal from the pulpit.

SHADOWS ON THE HOME.

The sorest trial that ever befel his domestic life, after the loss of his first wife, was the death of his beloved and almost idolized daughter, Bessie. This occurred November 24, 1876, at the age of twenty-two years. He was devotedly attached to his family, and bound by the strongest ties of affection to his children, as all who have shared his hospitality as privileged inmates of his home will testify. But his two daughters were his special delight; not in the gratification of any weak and foolish fondness, but as the

expression of a kind father's appreciative love. Bessie possessed many admirable qualities of mind and heart, but the sweet serenity of her spirit, her gentle and affectionate disposition, made her a general favorite both within and beyond the bounds of her home. Adding to and beautifying all her other qualities, was the charm of a sincere and consistent piety. Music was her special recreation and delight, and for it she developed marked and unusual capabilities. So manifest was this that her parents resolved to give her a thorough musical education, and fit her for a teacher. In the realization of this purpose, she was sent to the Boston Conservatory for instruction and training, where for three years she enjoyed and improved the best advantages that institution could afford, in which she completed her musical studies, and from which she graduated with honors. And then, just as their endeavors and self-denials were coming to their fruitage, and their hopes were about to be realized, death came into the household an unwelcome guest, and after a brief but painful illness, she died a triumphant death, and passed to the home above, to unite in the perfect harmonies of the song of Moses and the Lamb. It was another star which helped to light the earthly pilgrimage, not extinguished, but translated to a serener sphere, to shine with added lustre amidst celestial orbs of light. In a poem to

"My vanished child," subsequently written, the following stanza tells something of his grief, in which the entire household shared:

Oh, darling, dost thou live, and dost thou know
How well we loved thee, how we love thee still?
And our sore hearts cry out for thee, until
Down, gleaming through our blinding tears and woe,
Thou seemest to us, loving, gladsome, bright,
Our sunshine still, making our darkness light.

A BREAK IN THE RANKS.

One of the most vexatious of questions likely to rise in a pastor's experience concerns parties and factions in the church, always possible, but comparatively infrequent, in which a section of the body believes it can no longer act in harmony with the majority, but must stand aloof, or retire, on some difference of doctrine or of practice. The matter is made rather worse than better when they insist that it is a question of conscience with them. People who are conscientiously mistaken, or in the wrong, are the most difficult people in the world to get along with. And it is no unusual thing for them to mistake their will for their conscience. Somewhere about 1872, there came to Stonington certain brethren from outside, and stirred up the community into much excitement on the Second Advent doctrine. Now Dr. Palmer, and probably his entire church, held to the belief of Christ's second coming. But so much did not satisfy these excitable theorists.

That one thing must take precedence of all else—Christ was coming. The time drew near, and he even now stood before the door. All of which might be true, but they knew no more about it than did others. Their meetings naturally attracted a crowd, and they as naturally gained some converts from the various churches. Dr. Palmer was calm, considerate, conservative, and conciliating. Some of the members, and a few who were among the best and most devout, were captured by this to them new phase of the Christian faith.

All this region had been swept by a tide of adventism and the near approach of the world's end thirty years before; but this was a revival which appealed to a new generation. The difficulty lay not so much in the falsity of the doctrine, as in the schismatic manner in which it was urged. There was no fault found with the pastor, except that he did not adopt their views and methods, and enter with their zeal on a crusade upon that community in its advocacy. He had a distinct conception of what was his duty in the case, and could not be moved away from that line of action. He was kind, but firm. He did not berate them, nor use harshness; but he counselled them, prayed for them, and left the result with God. A considerable company, for the time being, gathered from various sources in the community, united and established separate

L. of C.

meetings in a hall, where they continued, with varying success, to hold forth their faith, and to proclaim the faithlessness of the churches. It was a great grief to him to lose the fellowship and the co-operation of brethren whom he loved, and still respected for their honesty, if not for their discretion. It is proper to add that these separate meeting of the Adventists were maintained with varying fortunes for a year or two, and then gradually dissolved and disappeared. Some of them went back and found a place again in the old church house, some left the community, and others drifted about lost to Christian fellowship and usefulness, without any church home. Just what was foreseen and foretold.

HIS VOLUME OF POEMS.

In the year 1884, was issued a volume of poems by Dr. Palmer, entitled "Psalms of Faith and Songs of Life," edited by his daughter, Miss Sara A. Palmer, herself possessing a strong current of poetic inspiration. Spiritual and poetic inspirations are nearly allied, if not, as is probable, identical, at least in their higher ideals. Spiritual inspiration in its loftiest realization is always poetical; while poetic inspiration in its purest and sublimest realm is always spiritual. This is said of the inspiration, not of the expression. Language hampers thought, and binds down the free visions of the imagination to me-

chanical forms of expression. The vivid pictures both of faith and of fancy may seem tame and dull when limited by verbal rhythm. Through his life Dr. Palmer was on familiar terms with the muses, and enjoyed their fellowship not in vain. The volume published received kind and favorable notice from the press, both religious and secular. The same was true of the English press, whose favorable comments were very gratifying to the author, and to his friends as well. So did it from a wide circle of personal friends who were favored by the reception of copies, and from not a few of well-known literary reputation.

A very generous note of recognition received from the poet Whittier was greatly prized and carefully cherished, a copy of which is hereto appended.*

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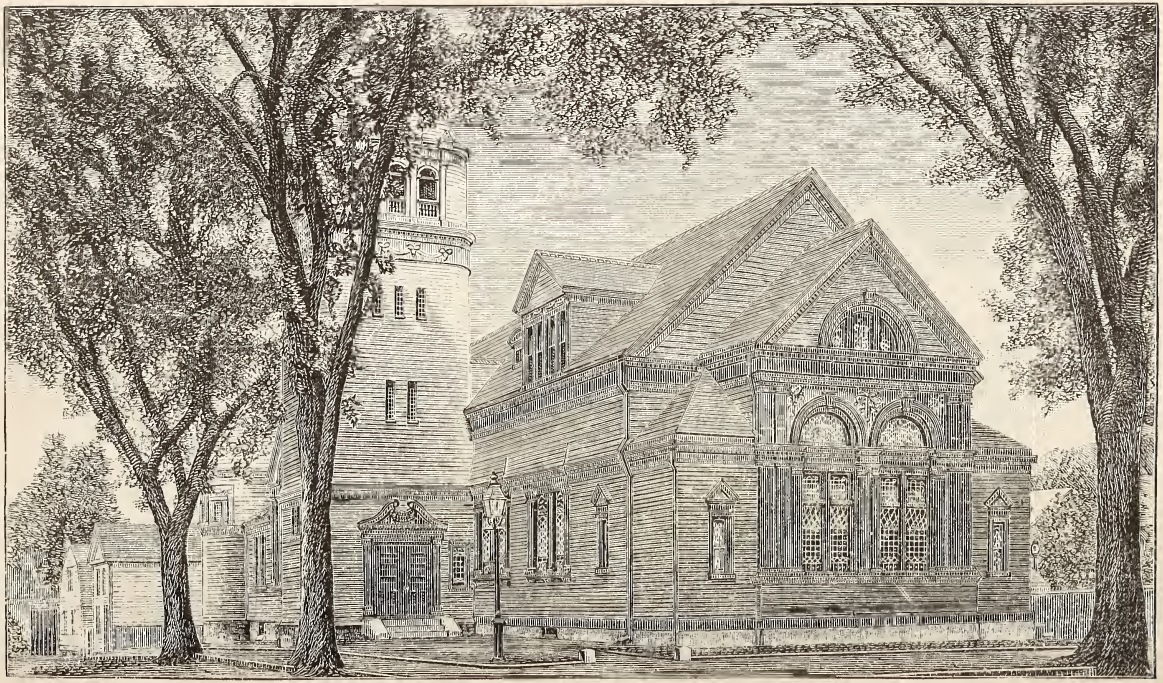
* Whittier, New England's pride and America's cherished son of song, whose devout spirit, pure character, and noble life have endeared him to the good of all lands. He has just passed out of this life to sing his songs in a fairer sphere. Died September 7, 1892, at Hampton Falls, N. H. The following is Mr. Whittier's letter, addressed to the daughter, in acknowledgment of a copy of her father's poems:

OAK KNOLL, DANVERS, MASS.
3d Mo. 5, 1881.

DEAR FRIEND: I should sooner have answered thy note but for illness. I have been reading thy father's poems with great satisfaction. The religious pieces are especially valuable. The airs of heaven seem to be blowing over them. And I like much the genial catholic spirit of the lighter poems. Icobed Palmer and Betty Noyes is a pleasing Yankee pastoral. I heartily thank thee for the beautiful volume. The face of thy father in the frontispiece is a benediction.

I am gratefully thy friend,
JOHN G. WHITTIER.

His poems were pastoral, patriotic, elegiac obituary, "in memoriam" of many personal friends, loved and honored. His descriptive pieces were largely commemorative of persons, places, and events connected with the scenes of his childhood and his early years. He did not, however, affect to be a poet. All this was pastime. He was a preacher of the gospel. That was his vocation. All else was incidental. The volume published is only a considerable part of what he wrote. Much probably of equal merit was left behind, especially a very successful attempt at rendering into English verse that grand old Latin hymn, the *Dies Irae*, at which nearly every considerable religious poet of modern times has tried his hand.



THE NEW BAPTIST CHURCH, STONINGTON, CT.

XIV.

A Notable Event.

On October 5, 1887, transpired one of the most notable events of his life. In some respects, the most so. That was his "golden jubilee," or the fiftieth anniversary of his ordination and setting apart to the work of the gospel ministry. It was proposed to celebrate the occasion by giving him a general reception of friends from far and near, with appropriate exercises, to conclude with a banquet tendered by his congregation. The Stonington Union Association with which he had been so many years connected, entered heartily into the proposal—indeed, I think it originated with them—and appointed a committee from that body to represent them, and co-operate with other friends in carrying out the project, of which committee Rev. Dr. Miner, of Mystic, was Chairman. With him were associated Rev. I. P. Brown, of New London, Rev. E. Dewhurst, of Voluntown, and others. His brethren in the ministry cheerfully participated, invitations were issued, and the project was carried through with marked success. It seemed spontaneous in many minds, and when once proposed, was at once ac-

cepted by universal and enthusiastic consent, not by his own congregation alone, but by the entire community, and indeed by neighboring communities of all denominations. It was generally agreed that a special celebration of that occasion would be a fitting and beautiful tribute of respect and affection to one so universally esteemed and honored. Many kind letters of regret and congratulation were received from those who could not be present. The following from the poet Whittier, directed to the committee on invitations, is worthy of a place here:

OAK KNOLL, Danvers, Mass., 10th Mo. 4, 1887.

DEAR FRIEND: I have this moment received thy invitation to the celebration of Dr. Palmer's fiftieth anniversary. I have only time to express my high respect for Dr. Palmer as a devoted Christian minister, and my admiration for his beautiful contributions to the hymns of the ages. Many of them are dear to the hearts of thousands. To their high literary merit is added "the beauty of holiness."

I am truly thy friend,

JOHN G. WHITTIER.

This autograph is with good reason fondly cherished by the family.

The afternoon session was largely attended. Interesting addresses were made, interspersed with appropriate music. At the close, abundant refreshments were provided, with which extensive ranges of tables banked with flowers, were laden, and the numerous company sat down to the good

cheer. The evening's exercises were enjoyed by a still larger company. Appropriate music interspersed the addresses both afternoon and evening, and an original hymn, written for the occasion by the daughter, Miss Sara A. Palmer, was sung. In the afternoon, Rev. P. G. Wightman presided, and brief addresses were made by Rev. C. Potter, Judge Wheeler, Dr. J. E. Weeden, Rev. O. T. Walker, Rev. C. H. Spaulding, Rev. C. A. Piddock, Hon. S. T. Stanton, Deacons Ray and Smith. In the evening, Dr. G. H. Miner presided, and addresses were made by Gov. James L. Howard, Drs. Edward Lathrop and P. A. Nordell. It had been expected that this writer would have taken a prominent part in the program of the evening. But unfortunately he was detained by illness, and could only send an appreciative letter of congratulation and regret. At the close of the exercises, the chairman called upon Dr. Palmer for a response. With much emotion he responded, "His words were few, but his heart was full." Thus ended a memorable occasion, not only memorable for the Baptists of Stonington and their pastor, but for all the people of this region. The entire proceedings were noteworthy, and the occasion was widely commented on, by both the New England and New York journals. It was an ovation of which any man might be proud, and of which no man could have been a more worthy recipient.

MOVEMENT FOR A NEW CHURCH BUILDING.

A natural and logical result from the jubilee was a movement for a new church building. Their old house, erected in 1834–5, though comfortable and every way respectable, was not wholly convenient, and really did not meet the demands either of the church or of the community. Talks of enlargement and improvement had on several occasions been had. Now it came up again for consideration. The people did not feel able to build anew, and to improve the present edifice, which had now been in use for nearly sixty years, was far from satisfactory. Though centrally located, the lot on which it stood was small, and much cramped by its surroundings.

After due consideration, it became evident that no improvement or change of that edifice practicable could be made satisfactory to the people. The next step was a heroic effort to secure a pledged subscription for a new house, that should cost twenty-five thousand dollars. It was not an easy task. There is a great difference in communities. Stonington is not a business centre, with manufactures and other monetary enterprises bringing in traffic and funds in abundance. In such communities, where money is in free circulation, such an enterprise has a more hopeful outlook. But to the surprise of many this proposition met with marked favor. The general

interest attending the jubilee had given the people a broader horizon in which to contemplate their own church life and Christian endeavor. And the idea of doing something new, and at the same time something noble, has always an inspiration, which stimulates courage, self-denial, and even self-sacrifice.

The people had a mind to work, and the leaders believed it could be done. All things are possible to them that believe. And it was done. There is no need of going into a detailed narration of the various steps by which difficulties were overcome, differences of opinion harmonized, dead points safely passed, unity maintained, all of which were of vital interest to those engaged, a final success achieved, and the top stone brought forth with joy, crying, "Grace, grace unto it." The people had a mind to give as well as to work, and the more they gave the more interest they felt in the enterprise, and the more satisfaction they derived from it. Such an effort always develops the grandest spirits and the noblest characters in a church, the best workers and the most generous givers in the community. Of all the workers, it is safe to say, that none were more interested or more efficient than the pastor's family—naturally so, though of necessity they could not be the largest givers, save of time and influence. Mrs. Palmer was untiring in efforts to cheer, encourage, and stimulate in the

work, and the daughter was ceaseless in her endeavors, and so efficient withal, that her father was inclined to believe the enterprise would have met a failure, but for the persistent influence she exerted. She felt that it must be accomplished, and would prove a closing triumph to the long and honored ministry of the father she so greatly revered. Other members of the family, though away from home, were by no means uninterested observers of the undertaking.

Work on the new building began late in 1888, and in July, 1889, the corner stone was laid with appropriate ceremonies. In July, 1890, the house was substantially completed, at a cost of about twenty-five thousand dollars, and save a balance of three thousand five hundred dollars, paid for. October 29, 1890, the public dedication of the building to the worship of God occurred, and the old house, which had been used for more than half a century was abandoned as a place of religious resort; abandoned it may be said with gladness, and yet with sadness. With it were associated many sweet and sacred memories, especially on the part of the older members, and no language could tell the endearments by which that place was enshrined in the pastor's heart. But the time had come to bury the dead past, however dear, and go forward.

The new building is located on the principal street of the village, and occupies the site on

Memorial Window, New Baptist Church.

which the old parsonage stood. It is an ornament to the town, and an attractive, and in all respects a most convenient house of worship, greatly creditable to the taste, enterprise, and devotion of those who conceived and achieved the project. In a material point of view it was regarded by Dr. Palmer and his friends as the crowning act of his long, and what would necessarily be, his closing ministry. A beautiful and most convenient parsonage was also erected by the munificence of a few of the members on a side street adjoining, and communicating with the rear of the church by a private passage. It often happens that conveniences and advantages that would have been greatly enjoyed in early years, come to us too late in life to be of large practical advantage, however great the gratification they may bring. The new pulpit for his use, and the new parsonage for the use of his family, were not to be for long enjoyment. They however well knew the probabilities of the future, and when the time came, gave them up to him who had provided them, not indeed without emotion, but without murmuring, looking for a city that hath foundation, and a house not made with hands.

At the dedication, Rev. Dr. Andrews, president of Brown University, preached in the forenoon, Dr. Palmer offering the prayer of dedication, Dr. Miller presiding, Dr. Miner taking part in the

services. In the evening, the exercises were of a more general character. Lieut. Gov. Howard, of Hartford, presided. A historical paper was read, and Gov. Howard addressed the meeting, followed by Dr. Hiscox, of New York ; Dr. Nordell, of New London ; Rev. Principal Scott, of Suffield ; Rev. P. S. Evans, of Hartford ; and Rev. C. J. Hill, of Stonington. At the close, Dr. Palmer rose and with deep feeling responded to the kind congratulations of the occasion, expressing his great satisfaction and devout thankfulness at the successful issue of the generous endeavors of the people. He added that he wished to try his voice in the new house, and therefore intended to preach there on the next Sunday. This he did with great apparent satisfaction to himself, and certainly with great satisfaction to his hearers. That sermon was the real "dedication sermon." His intellectual vigor was remarkable, and his perception of spiritual truth never seemed clearer. His sermon touched all hearts.

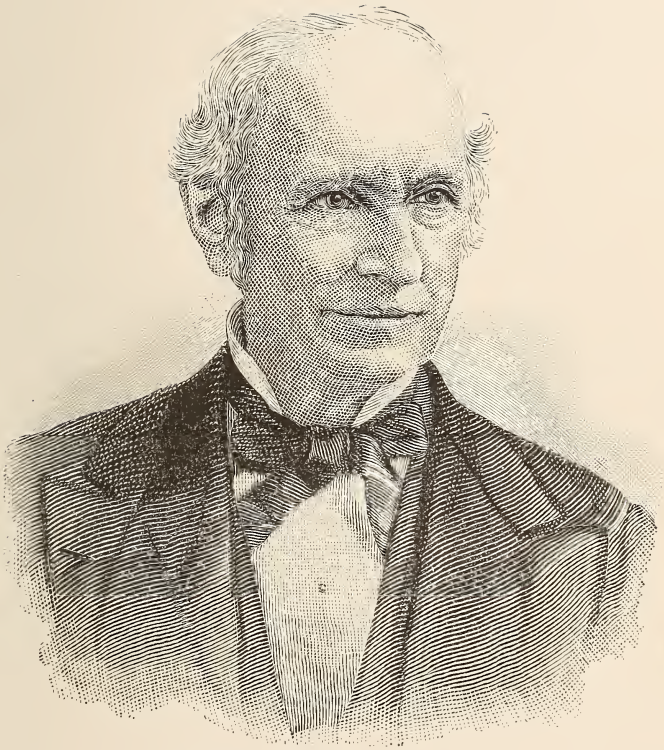
A striking and beautiful feature of the new edifice is the large stained-glass memorial window in the north elevation of the main audience room, and dedicated by the generosity and affection of the relatives and friends of the pastor. The central panel represents Moses giving the Law, and was the gift of his four sons and the daughter to the memory of their loved and honored father. The side panels, one representing Paul preaching

the gospel, the other Stephen receiving inspiration from heaven, were the gifts of brothers, sisters, and personal friends. Several other memorial windows of smaller dimensions ornament the audience room, and impart an aspect of artistic beauty to the place, while they bring to loving remembrance the departed, and harmonize well with the spirit of worship. Most of the furniture consisted of memorial gifts in recognition of the worth of the living, or the virtues of the dead ; especially were the pulpit, with its furniture, and the seating of the infant classroom given in memory of the pastor's daughter, Miss Bessie H. Palmer, early removed to her heavenly home.

XV.

The Last of Earth.

Dr. Palmer's health had never been robust, as has already been remarked, and yet through a long and active life, he had for the most part maintained a vigorous constitution, and great physical energy and activity. His predominant nervous temperament was inclined to over-action, and therefore to occasional re-action. But such a temperament, with great force of will, possessed remarkable recuperative powers. Occasionally he would be quite prostrated, but after temporary rest and change of scenery, he would return to his duties, apparently as well and cheerful as ever. On the whole, for the last ten or twelve years, possibly for twenty, his general health had been perhaps as good as at any time during his life, up to within a year of its close. Then there came to be at times unmistakable signs of a giving way, a gradual crumbling of the foundations. Strangers detected the tokens more readily than did his family. In this there was nothing remarkable. It was perhaps time, according to the course of nature, that the physical machinery should begin to work slowly, suffer



Albert G. Palmer, D. D.

At the Age of Seventy Years.

derangement, and give signs of decay. And yet after each decline there would follow a revival of languid energies, giving hope of more permanent recovery. But these hopeful tokens could not at his time of life be reasonably expected long to last. Through all these ups and downs, however, his mental faculties remained clear and strong. Not a few of his friends, and some of his own family, believed it would be better for him to resign the pastorate, and free himself from all sense of exacting responsibility, and preserve his strength so far and so long as possible. There were so many opportunities for his helpfulness among his brethren and the churches, all of whom looked up to him as a father and a friend. He could have worked when he felt like it, and rested when he wished. Five years before the close we kindly and earnestly urged upon him the expediency of such a course. But it did not meet his views. He could not endure to think of not being pastor, surrounded by the loving sympathy of a church, still his own. With regard to this matter, his son writes: "Looking back over the past ten years, my one regret is that I did not insist on his resigning his pastorate at the commencement of that period, and coming here to rest and enjoy the life he so much loved. But he also loved his work in the church. His people at that time seemed devoted to him, and it did not seem either to mother, or to Sara, or even

to himself, wise for him to retire. Indeed, to the very last, both mother and Sara thought he would never be contented out of harness. And so he died in it. But I shall carry through my life the regrets that I did not more actively oppose it. But he had his wish."

Something more than a year before the final issue, he was rather suddenly prostrated by a severe illness, due chiefly to local physical difficulties. So severe and exhausting was this attack, that for a time both his physician and his family were doubtful of the final outcome. His son sent on from New York the most skillful medical aid for consultation and co-operation with his family doctor, and through the divine blessing and affectionate care, the crisis was safely passed, and he once more came back to life, to friends, and to some further service in the church. But he said that he had been so near the verge as to look over and catch a glimpse of the lights upon the farther shore. His return to life and earth seemed like coming away from the home of his soul, so dear, and to which he was so near. His spirit was attuned to the dirge-like aspiration of Tennyson, uttered from his sick bed :

"When the dumb hour clothed in black,
Brings the dreams about my bed,
Call me not so often back,
Silent voices of the dead,

Toward the lowland ways behind me,
And the sunshine that is gone.
Call me rather, silent voices,
Forward to the starry track,
Glimmering up the heights beyond me,
On, and ever on!"

From this attack he recovered very slowly, and only partially. It was three months before he was able to perform service in the pulpit. His brethren in the ministry were extremely kind, as by turns they took his place, and as a service of love ministered to his people. Rev. Drs. Miller, Miner, and Nordell are specially to be noted as rendering this fraternal service. Others too, commanded his gratitude and that of the church. When at last he was able to engage in his "loved employ" once more, and preach the gospel of the blessed God to men, it was only for a single service on the Sabbath. The church very considerately, and very properly, secured the services of a divinity student, to preach once each Sunday, for six months. Even this help, while he gratefully appreciated the thoughtful kindness of the church, he insisted that he did not need, as he felt able to preach in the evening as well as in the morning. But the people evidently judged the case more accurately than he himself did. When this engagement was completed, he again attempted the full Sunday service, but it was too much for his strength. His exhausted energies did not sustain the unequal task.

Sunday, April 5, 1891, was my last visit with him, and when on the next day I bade himself and family good-bye to return home, I saw him for the last time alive. Some time previously I had promised to come on, when he felt the need of help, spend a Sunday and preach for him. The latter part of March he wrote me in accordance with the promise, desiring me to come for the first Sunday in the next month. Accordingly I went; found him cheerful, and quite as vigorous as I had expected. He insisted on my going out with him to call on a few families of old friends, whom he always wished me to see when visiting there. But his step had lost the elasticity of other days, and though cheerful and buoyant in spirit, he seemed easily wearied. On Sunday I conducted the services, morning and evening, giving him entire relief, except to offer prayer. My visit was to me delightful, as my visits in his family had always been. To him it seemed a peculiar satisfaction to listen once more to the friend and companion of his early years; to discuss current events, and talk over the far distant past. We parted, with little thought on my part, or probably on his, that we were to meet no more on earth, save at his funeral. Two or three brief notes were exchanged between us after that visit; then came a pause. I wrote again, and no reply. I became alarmed, with a vague apprehension that something more

than oversight and neglect prevented a response. Then I wrote to his daughter, and received a speedy answer which realized my fears. He was very low, and sinking, evidently with but a short time to live. Later, the same day, June 30, 1891, a telegram was received announcing his death, and naming the day and hour of the funeral.

For a few weeks after I had seen him in April, he appeared in comfortable health, and preached for several Sundays. But ebbing strength could not endure the strain, and again he yielded to weakness. His last sermon was preached May 21st. His illness increased, and it was thought that a change might benefit him. Accordingly it was decided that he should make a visit to his son, A. M. Palmer, at Stamford, Conn. He went. The journey was made with comparative comfort, but no benefit resulted. Indeed, he became worse; so much so, that he desired to return home. He was taken on a couch to a drawing-room car, and reached home safely, taking his bed, from which it was destined he should not arise. For some three weeks he remained there, ministered to by the loving care of a faithful wife, and a daughter whose affectionate devotion knew no bounds. For the most part he was a great sufferer, though at the last, free from conscious pain, he sank quietly to rest, and slept. Thus to another of God's noble and devoted servants came release.

Life's fitful dream was over, broken by the rising dawn of a brighter, and an endless day. The struggle was finished; the battle was ended; the victory won; and the "well done, thou good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord," was realized by him, who had so often comforted sad hearts and cheered weary lives by these assurances. June 30th, 1891, at 2.30 P. M., in his seventy-ninth year, he fell asleep.

No added word in this connection could be more appropriate than one of his own touching and beautiful poems.

THE DYING CHRISTIAN TO HIS SOUL.

From the Latin of Musculus.

How sinks my heart in death's cold deadly strife?
Nothing of earth's sweet light to me remains.
Yet Christ, my everlasting light and life,
My fearing, trembling, sinking soul sustains.

But why, my soul! O wherefore shouldst thou fear
To rise to the bright mansions of the blest?
Behold, thy angel guide himself is near,
To lead thee to yon seats of peace and rest.

O leave this wretched, mouldering house of clay,
Shattered and crumbling down to earth and dust,
God's faithful hand will at the appointed day,
A glorious form, restore the sacred trust.

Ah! thou hast sinned. Alas! thou hast, I know;
But Christ has purged by his own precious blood,
The sins of all believers, white as snow,
In blood-washed robes presenting them to God!

But death is terrible. It is, I know;
  But when thy immortality is nigh,
And when thy Saviour calls thee from his throne,
  Wilt thou, O trembling soul, still fear to die?

Since Christ for thee hath triumphed over death,
  And sin and Satan put beneath thy feet,
Fear not to yield to him thy parting breath,
  But spread thy joyful wings thy Lord to meet.

XVI.

The Funeral Services.

The funeral rites and the burial took place July 2d, commencing at 2 P. M. All was simple, appropriate, and without ostentation. All attempt at display was carefully avoided, which made the occasion more touching and impressive. Beautiful floral decorations, the gifts of reverent affection, were abundant and fitting. A large and chastened audience filled the new edifice, so recently dedicated by his presence and prayer, now consecrated by his presence in coffined silence. The crowding multitude had come to take a final look at their loved and honored pastor, and to say a last farewell. Fortunately no attempt was made to exhibit artistic music with which to torture the tender sensibilities of friends, or to make spectators undevout, as is too often done on special occasions. Three sweet, fitting, and familiar hymns, which he had loved to sing and to hear, were sung by the choir and the audience, with simple rendering and subdued emotion. Appropriate Scriptures were read, prayer offered, and the addresses made. Rev. C. A. Piddock, of Hartford, editor of the "Chris-

tian Secretary," a warm personal friend of the family, presided, and conducted the services. By some unexplained oversight, those who had been expected to make addresses on the occasion had not been notified to that effect, though duly invited to be present. It was the wish of the family that his old and life-long friend, the present writer, should make the first address. But of this he was not aware till called upon to speak. So with the others, except the Rev. Mr. Piddock, who had been requested to conduct the services with such remarks as he might be disposed to make. His address was most fitting and appropriate. It was perhaps quite as well on the whole that the addresses should be unpremeditated and spontaneous. For though less formally accurate, they likely would be more sympathetic and fraternal, as they probably were.

The following constitutes the order and substance of the funeral services, as phonographically reported for the press at the time.

FUNERAL SERVICES OF REV. DR. A. G. PALMER, STONINGTON, CONN., JULY 2, 1891.

"To-day has been a day of mourning for the inhabitants of Stonington, and many were the friends who came here from neighboring towns and cities, as well as from other States, to show their sympathy and to pay a last tribute of respect to the memory of Rev. Albert G. Palmer,

D. D., whose funeral obsequies were observed in the new edifice of the First Baptist Church, which was dedicated last fall, and which is a monument of the labors of the dead pastor. For thirty-nine years Dr. Palmer has labored faithfully and successfully in this town, and his genial disposition and tender regard for the feelings of others won for him the devotion and affection, not only of the members of the Baptist denomination, but of the entire community. He was deeply interested in the mission work of the State, and served as moderator at the annual meetings of the Stonington Union Association seven times, and preached the annual sermon six times.

"There was a large attendance at the funeral to-day, the body of the church being completely filled, and the mournful expression on the faces of those present testified to the high esteem in which the deceased pastor was held. Beautiful floral pieces in abundance were arranged in front of and on the platform, and the table in the rear was artistically decorated with ferns and cut flowers. Among the floral gifts were a large cross seven feet high, bearing the inscription, 'Our pastor,' in purple immortelles, presented by the congregation.

"The visiting clergy of Connecticut included Rev. Dr. Nordell, New London; Rev. J. B. Brown, New London; Rev. E. D. Miller, Groton; Rev. D. H. Miller, D. D., Mystic; Rev. G. H.

Miner, D. D., Mystic; Rev. W. L. Swan, Noank; Rev. P. S. Evans, New Haven; Rev. N. T. Allen, Groton; Rev. Dr. Piddock, editor of 'Christian Secretary,' Hartford; Rev. E. Dewhurst, Voluntown; Rev. Dr. Bixby, Providence; and Rev. Dr. Hiscox, New York.

"Rev. Dr. Piddock conducted the exercises, which included an organ voluntary by Miss Fannie Davis, hymn by the choir, invocation by Rev. Mr. Hill, Stonington, Scripture reading by Rev. N. T. Allen, Groton, hymn by the choir, prayer by Rev. E. Dewhurst, Voluntown, address by Dr. Hiscox, New York, address by Dr. Bixby, Providence, hymn by the choir, and an address by Rev. Dr. Piddock, Hartford.

"A short service was held at the home of the deceased at 11.30 o'clock in the morning, after which the remains were taken to the church, where many, who were unable to be present at the services in the afternoon, availed themselves during the interval of the opportunity to look for the last time upon the face of their honored friend and pastor.

"Fully half an hour before the time for the service to begin the church was well filled, and at 2.30 Miss Davis played a voluntary on the organ, and the family of the deceased, preceded by the visiting pastors, marched from the house into the church, and occupied seats in front of the platform. On the platform were seated Rev. Dr.

Hiscox, Rev. E. Dewhurst, Rev. Mr. Hill, Rev. Dr. Piddock, Rev. Dr. Bixby, and Rev. N. T. Allen. At 2.30, the service was begun by the choir singing, 'Jesus, Lover of my Soul,' which was one of Dr. Palmer's favorite hymns. Then came the invocation by Rev. Mr. Hill, of the Congregational Church.

"Rev. N. T. Allen, of Groton, then read appropriate Scriptures, and prayer was offered by Rev. E. Dewhurst, of Voluntown. 'O Thou, in whose Presence my Soul takes Delight,' was next tenderly and effectively rendered by the choir, following which was an address by Dr. Hiscox of New York.

REV. DR. HISCOX' ADDRESS.

"During the course of his address, Dr. Hiscox was so much overcome with a sense of grief, and his emotion at times was so great, that his voice trembled, and was scarcely audible. He said:

I am well-nigh overwhelmed with a sense of personal bereavement, and the solemnity which this occasion brings. Until the choir commenced singing the hymn they have just rendered, I did not know that I was expected to speak on this occasion. My brother said: "You can say something." Of course I can. I could say much more than the proprieties of this occasion would permit. My parents long years ago passed away from life; I had brothers and sisters, but they too have long slept in silent dust; and one still nearer and dearer, the centre of heart and home, has ceased from earth, and entered into light and life. I have sons still living, whom I love and cherish. But aside from that small

circle, there is not a living man, whose death would be to me so sore a bereavement, as is the death of Albert G. Palmer. There are other men, both in and out of the ministry, with whom for years gone by I have met more frequently, and with whom in Christian work I have associated more intimately, but not one of whom I should miss so sadly. In passing back and forth through this town, though I could not always call and see him, yet when I could it was a great pleasure; and even when I could not, his presence here was a sort of sympathetic fellowship, not to my fancy alone, but to my heart. I have other friends in Stonington, but Dr. Palmer was to me the centre of its attraction and its life.

It is now almost half a century since we first met and became friends. We were scarcely more than boys then. We were very unlike, yet we had much in common, and were attracted to each other. Possibly our very contrarieties became a bond of union; our acquaintance ripened into friendship, and our friendship nourished, if it did not form, a life-long fellowship of fraternal affection. I would love to give my estimate of his character and the work of his life, and dwell upon the many admirable qualities of his heart and mind, but it is impossible to do it here. His toils are over, but his works follow him. He had his trials and his heart-aches, though so grand a son of consolation to others in trouble. Oh, how vividly I recall the hour, when years and years ago, that beautiful and saintly girl, the wife of his youth, the mother of these two sons, lay in her coffin in the old church, and I, in answer to his earnest request, stood to preach at her funeral, with the sorrow on my heart I should have felt had she been my sister. I have always honored her who came afterward to take the vacant place, and who has been to those children a true mother, and to him, through all these many years, a true wife, the sharer of his joys and sorrows, helping to bear his burdens, and to smooth the rough places in the path of life. I remember with what solicitude he long desired and hoped that one of these sons

might follow him in the sacred work of the gospel ministry. His prayers on that behalf are still unanswered. Possibly it is now too late. God knows.

I would not too much oppress your feelings, or torture your hearts by protracted words of grief. And yet nature rightly claims the tribute of our tears, and life moves ever to funereal strains. You have not forgotten the bitterness of that hour, when a tenderly loved child and sister, just emerging into accomplished womanhood, faded from earth, and passed to the fadeless bliss of heaven. To-day reaches the climax of your grief, as this wife now widowed, mourns the beautiful staff on which she leaned, broken before her eyes. This daughter, who well nigh idolized her father, while their mutual attachment was almost like the affection of lovers, and these sons will miss more than they now know, the father they have so much loved and honored. The church is broken hearted, and the whole community is in mourning. There are not many such men to lose; husbands, fathers, citizens, and friends. But we have had him, and thank God for him. We cannot now be deprived of him, though his personal presence will be with us no more. But his memory will abide; his life belongs to the world. His example, his influence, his good name, and his beneficent influence are the world's benediction, and the heritage of those that loved him. A heritage richer than gold, and more to be desired than much fine gold. A spotless name, an untarnished character, a noble life which the tongue of calumny has never touched; a life and character above censure, above suspicion. These are the grandest conceptions of the human mind; the grandest achievements possible to human endeavor. These all are yours, and the world's. To say nothing of sixty years of laborious and faithful seed-sowing of that Word which liveth and abideth forever, it is no small thing for a man to live almost eighty years in a world like this, and sixty years of that time in the active duties of the Christian ministry, in the midst of envyings, jealousies,

suspicions, and antipathies, exposed to temptations, misconceptions, and detractions, and still maintain a reputation above reproach, and free from even the breath of scandal, as he has done. Thanks be unto God, who hath given him the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ.

I spoke a little while ago of his, as being an evangelical ministry. It was most emphatically such. A ministry of the grace of God with salvation by faith, in our Lord Jesus Christ alone. The ministry of the apostles, and of the New Testament. From this he never swerved or turned aside. Read over his numerous sermons in manuscript, or those in print, and find it true. No man better appreciated the true mission of scholarship, or more honored the fruits of a reverent and sound criticism, than did he. He fully understood there was a legitimate work for an able and a critical scholarship to do, in exploring, interpreting, and expounding the sacred Scriptures. But the hypotheses, the theories, the guesses of pretentious critics, whether high or low, the assumptions of theology, whether new or old, he had no confidence in, and no patience with.

But I must not detain you. He has gone from us, though with us still. He has passed beyond the mystic veil, which hides from mortal gaze the grandest realities of the universe. I miss him, but I shall soon meet him. We are not far apart, though I do not hear his voice, nor see his footprints longer on the sands of times. He has fought the good fight, and won the battle. He fell, but he conquered. We have a funeral, he has a coronation, and takes his seat among kings and priests unto God, with the radiant throng of blood-bought and blood-washed victors. We shall meet him there amidst the unfading glory. And when the father seeks his children, may no one of them be missing. When the pastor seeks his flock, may they all be there in bright array. May God bless and comfort the bereaved family, the stricken church, the sorrowing community. Good-bye, friend and brother. We part in the shadows of this evening time, but

we shall meet not long hence, in the morning dawn, whose light shall know no shadows, and whose gladness shall know no grief! Till then—Good-bye.

ADDRESS OF REV. DR. BIXBY.

It was ten o'clock this morning when I heard that the funeral service of Dr. Palmer was to take place to-day, and I felt that I must come immediately, so I hurried to the train. I did not expect to speak on this occasion when I came, but there are two or three reasons why I am glad to say a few words.

I am glad to say a personal word, because I have known our departed brother for the past forty years. I loved him and esteemed him very highly; few men more so, if any, in this world. I am glad also to represent Rhode Island here to-day, because he spent several of his most successful years of ministerial life in Rhode Island. He commenced his ministry there. It seemed fitting that I should represent, in a few words to-day, the churches of Rhode Island. It would not be right for me to speak at length, nor would it be right for me to say all I think and feel on this occasion. It is fully forty years since I first met Dr. Palmer. It was at a missionary meeting. I remember talking with him at that time about the great work of world-wide evangelization. I saw how broad were his views, and how warm was his heart concerning the great work of missions, and my heart was drawn out to him. After several years of missionary service in Burma, I met him again. He was acquainted with some of my personal friends, Rev. Justus Vinton and wife and others, who were associated with me in the field. We were instinctively drawn to each other, and held together the most delightful fellowship. He was a warm friend of the missionaries, and took a deep interest in the spread of the gospel in all lands. I saw the strength of his nature and the warmth of his affections. His life was consecrated to his

Master, and to the cause of humanity. His whole life was a benediction to this world.

The eloquent words that fell from his lips, and the burning words that came from his pen will not soon be forgotten. His ideal thoughts, the poems which he wrote, are pure gems which the world will not let die.

One thing has deeply impressed me as I have thought of this noble Christian life, and that is this: how profoundly Christianity may influence and mold a man's life. This community has been greatly favored; it has had for almost fifty years a striking and beautiful example of the reality and power of the Christian religion in this man's life.

Another thought that comes to me is this: how profound is the influence of a man's life in this world which has been molded by the Christian religion. How profound is the influence of this man's life.

We cannot conceive what that influence has been in this State over these churches, over these ministers of Connecticut, and over the churches and ministers of Rhode Island, and I would like to say over the ministers and churches of the Baptist denomination in the United States.

I feel confident that his influence for good has not been confined to our own denomination, but that other denominations have shared in the good work he has done. All have profited by this most useful life.

My last thought is this: how profound must be the joy of one who has walked with God for sixty years, and whose life has been molded by the spirit of Christ. How profound must be his joy when he enters within the veil to greet his Lord face to face.

MR. PIDDOCK'S ADDRESS.

There is in every man a natural longing for immortality, a desire to do something that shall live forever. The poet said he had written something that the world would not willingly let die, and the painter that he had painted some-

thing that would last for eternity. Yet in the midst of all our doing, we have to remember that we are but dust, and that it is appointed unto all men once to die.

But to our friend, death had no terrors, for he realized that

> It is not death to die,
> And leave this weary road,
> And with the fellowship on high,
> To be at home with God.

Death to him only meant reunion with those whom he had loved and lost, and for whom his pure spirit often longed.

But I desire at this time to pay a tribute of memory and say a word of love for a beloved counselor and friend.

As a preacher, Dr. Palmer was a man of wonderful analytical power. His sermons were eminently scriptural and always fresh and suggestive. One of the great secrets of his long pastorate is that he kept himself in sympathy with the progress of the age, and was interested in the latest discoveries of science and new views of truth. A great characteristic of his nature was fidelity to conviction, and his preaching had a simplicity and directness that impressed all who heard him. He was utterly free from all pedantry or pretense. His preaching was also characterized by an earnest spirit of evangelism, and he regarded the preacher as an ambassador sent with a message to invite men to Jesus Christ. His theological platform was broad, and on it any Christian could find a place. He believed in the unction of the Holy Spirit, and all his sermons were the messages of a man whose heart was filled with love for others. My own friendship and association with him began in a series of revival services, and I know that he rejoiced more in the triumphs of the preaching of the gospel than in anything else. His prayers were models of simplicity and were in fact talks with God, and impressed those who heard them as real communion with Christ. In prayer meeting he was much at home, and by telling illustrations and apt scriptural quotations would prevent any meeting from being dull.

As a literary man, Dr. Palmer had fine taste and a true poetic nature. He was well acquainted with the great masters of English prose and verse, and his own poetry shows a purity of style and a felicity of expression rarely equalled. The church will not soon forget some of his translations of Latin hymns, his sonnets and poems of faith and love.

As a minister, Dr. Palmer was much loved by his brother ministers. His genial and kind treatment of all with whom he came in contact, and his tender regard for the feelings of others, won for him a large place in the hearts of all. He had a deep interest in all the mission work of the State, and gave much thought and attention to questions of State evangelization. The German poet says: "Do the duty that lies nearest thee," and Dr. Palmer was especially interested in sustaining the weaker churches in the hill towns of Eastern Connecticut. The old church, the home of his boyhood, and the place where he was baptized on Pendleton Hill, was a place sacred to him, and was often on his lips and in his thought. For many years he has been a trustee of our State Convention, and ready and anxious for advancing the work.

As a pastor, Dr. Palmer has had a remarkable record. For thirty-nine years he has served this church, and few of its members have ever known any other minister. Many of you he has joined in marriage, and has spoken words of comfort over the cold forms of your loved ones, and told you of the resurrection and the life. The homes of this place will miss him, for he was ever welcome. No other voice will ever have such music as his, for he has indeed been a friend to you all.

In his home life he was especially happy. He loved his home, and his wife and children were bound to him with the strongest ties. It is rare to find such love in a household as existed in his home. He rejoiced in the love of his household, and they looked up to him with veneration and rev-

erence. He was remarkably even in his disposition and temper and had an ideal home life.

Dr. Palmer was a very manly man and detested shams of every sort. But he believed in true nobility of character, and *as a citizen* he was interested in education and in all good causes.

We can hardly realize that he is gone and that we shall not greet each other again here in this world. But I console myself with the reflection that his memory is still with us a precious heritage, which we shall not let die.

It may be said of him that

> The world bid him good-morning
> When he bid the world good-night,

and this is true fame.

By the loving hands of his brothers in the ministry, and followed by the tears not only of his family, but of the entire community, he will be laid at rest by the side of dear ones in yonder cemetery. We shall not see him walking these streets again. This building, which he so desired to see erected, and which is one of the monuments of his work in this place, will not receive him again. His voice, so earnest for truth is silent now.

> Soldier of Christ, well done,
> Rest from thy loved employ.

Farewell, loved spirit, until the meeting when there shall be no separations, and where death can never come. We shall hope to meet in the eternal morning.

> Above the grandeur of the sunsets
> Which delight this earthly clime,
> And the brightest of the dawnings
> Breaking on the hills of time,
> Is the richness of the radiance
> Of the land beyond the sun,
> Where the noble have their country,
> When the work of life is done.

The interment took place immediately following the services at the church. A long procession of carriages and people on foot marched to the rural cemetery, a little out of the village, where, in a beautiful granite mausoleum, a few years previously erected for him by his eldest son, Albert M. Palmer, his body was laid to rest, surrounded by his weeping family and the bereaved community. The service at the grave was conducted by this writer, and consisted of brief remarks and a prayer. To that tomb the dust of the wife of his youth had already been removed, after reposing in the old village burying ground for thirty-seven years. There they rest in silence and in peace till the archangel's trump and the voice of God shall call the sleeping dead to rise.

A MEMORIAL SERVICE.

On the evening of Sunday, July 5, 1891, a large audience filled the Baptist church edifice for a service in memory of the late pastor. It was a union service of citizens without distinction of church or denomination, gathered to show their respect for, and appreciation of the good and noble man whom they delighted to honor. Pastors and members of the various churches were present and took part in the exercises. Rev. George H. Miner, of Mystic, presided on the occasion. Addresses were made by Dr. Miner,

Rev. J. C. Wilson and Rev. C. J. Hill, of the Congregational churches; by Deacon E. D. Smith and Judge R. A. Wheeler. The exercises were deeply interesting throughout, appropriate music was interspersed by the choir, the children, and the congregation. A deeply pathetic incident was related by the Rev. Mr. Hill. He said: "Just six months ago to-morrow morning, Dr. Palmer came to my study to make arrangements for a special service in memory of Rev. Mr. Clift, a former pastor of the Congregational church here, and an old and cherished friend of his. After we had concluded the arrangements, he said: 'The next memorial service will be in my church.' I replied: 'I hope not for a good while yet, doctor.' He said: 'I don't know; it will not be very long before you will have a memorial service in my church.' And so I suggested that we fulfill his anticipation expressed six months ago, and have such a service here to-night." That suggestion, made six months before, seemed prophetic.

XVII.

Dr. Palmer as I Knew Him.

It only remains for me to give my estimate of his personality, and note his marked characteristics, as I knew him, during the half century of our acquaintance—a service which my memory supplies, and my heart dictates far better than my pen can inscribe.

His Personal Appearance.—In personal appearance, if not specially striking because of any peculiarity, he was decidedly noticeable. Of something more than medium height, well formed, rather spare in flesh than otherwise, with clear-cut, well-fashioned, and pleasing features, inclining to the Roman rather than to the Grecian mold; his eye keen and penetrating, yet mild and attractive in its glances; his forehead broad and full; hair black, and in his earlier years abundant, but growing thin and becoming silvery white in later life. His walk on the street was somewhat rapid, with a nervous movement, as if on some errand, or in the performance of some duty which he was intent on completing without needless delay. He moved with a slight inclination forward, and usually with his eyes on

the ground, with a sedate expression of countenance, as if his meditations were occupied with some subject of serious thought, rather than with external scenes, or anything transpiring about him. Indeed, though keenly alive to the interests of society, and well posted in current history, yet he lived more in the realm of mental reflection than in that of physical action. His *tout ensemble*, especially in the pulpit, all aglow with deep feeling and earnest expression, presented a fair type of the Puritan divine of two hundred years ago. In his earlier years he was a decidedly handsome young man, but with a thoughtful air, and an aspect of intellectual superiority, but without a touch of apparent conscious personal vanity. In later years a stranger would have pronounced him a fine looking gentleman, with a scholarly bearing and a benevolent expression of countenance ; with a large admixture of the intellectual and the sentimental in his mental composition.

In the Family. His home was a most hospitable one, as multitudes can testify. And not only personal friends, but strangers often found there a welcome. Not a few who had no claim upon its generous provision, shared there a refreshing meal, and received kindly words of cheer. In this hospitality his wife was a ready partner, and the children were partakers of the common feeling. Many unfortunate ones who fell in their

way were helped over hard places by their kindly sympathy and timely aid. To those who had been privileged to be often in the home, it was most manifest that considerate affection ruled there. There was nothing of harsh severity on the part of the father; nothing of petty irascibility on the part of the mother; nothing of rude, unfilial disobedience on the part of the children. Of course, domestic life with them, as with all, had its lights and shadows. But as for mutual affection, without pretense, the respect due to parents, and a kindly paternal regard for children, it is seldom that so near an approach to an ideal home is to be found. Mrs. Palmer now states that, after forty-six years of married life, through all the trials and changes incident to a minister's position, she never saw her husband angry, though naturally of a quick and excitable temperament. She had seen him vexed, tried, disconcerted, and indignant; but never really angry. The sons for many years have lived away from home, but always held their mother in affectionate regard, and for their father cherished unbroken respect and honor. Especially was the responsive love between the father and the remaining daughter as remarkable as it was sincere. She nearly idolized him; and when he died, it seemed to her that well nigh all the light of earth and time was extinguished in the darkness of death and the grave. Nor must it be

forgotten that the two eldest sons were children of another mother. But no distinction could be observed, either on the part of the new mother or of the children. Her motherly love and their filial affection alike recognized one family, and only one. The home, as to its social aspect, was equally a stranger to boisterous hilarity on the one hand, and oppressive solemnity on the other. It was in its ordinary tide and current a cheerful, sunny place, which attracted, but did not repel; such as a Christian home should be, where cheerful thanksgiving to the Giver of all blessing was daily offered up in heart-felt praise.

The parsonage offered a cordial welcome to any and all members of the church and congregation; indeed, to a much larger extent than many pastors and their families might have thought expedient. But here all felt at liberty to come for comfort and for counsel, or to suggest or discuss plans for the church's interest, or methods of work for the advancement of its welfare. To a large extent the church was one family, which found its centre and its council chamber in the parsonage.

As a Companion.—As a companion he was genial, easy, and agreeable, and within narrow limits, free in conversation. But he was not a great talker, and not what would be called a conversationalist, and when in large companies said little, unless his opinion was sought. Then

it was readily given, and always to the purpose. He thought more than he spoke. But in a small circle of personal friends he was free and unrestrained, and in the best sense companionable. There was nothing sombre or repellant in his manner, and he enjoyed a laugh as heartily, when occasion served, as any one. He was not an anecdotist nor a story-teller, and held in deserved contempt the too common custom, even among ministers, of relating stale jokes and funny stories, not a few of which are tainted with vulgarity, and some of which approach indecency, given simply for the purpose of producing merriment and raising a laugh. Such an ambition on the part of ministers of the gospel to him was painful and disgusting—and rightly so. His conversation was pure, whether in public or in private, and though he could tell a story or repeat a witticism, and join with others with his ringing laugh, yet no suggestion of anything inconsistent with the purest taste ever fell from his lips. His remarks in company were rather in detached sentences, which touched the salient points of subjects, than in continuous and sustained conversation, which discussed the whole question. On all matters of current history, governmental policy, the drift of religious thought, questions of biblical criticism, and the progress of evangelical truth, he had well-defined and intelligent opinions, ready on occasion to be

expressed, and which commended themselves by their reasonableness to all who heard.

In the Pulpit.—In the pulpit his deportment and bearing were serious and reverential. It was evident to a considerate observer that his thoughts were busy rather within than without; rather with what he had to do and say to the people, than with the people themselves. There was none of that idle or curious gazing about, scanning the audience, which marks the pulpit manners of so many clergymen. His whole bearing, from the time he entered the pulpit till he left it, indicated that he was there for a serious purpose, to which he wished to keep his thoughts closely confined. And that feeling impressed his audience. He was no pulpit declaimer, no elocutionist, not even a pulpit orator. He was discharging functions superior to any of these. He was an ambassador of Christ, a preacher of the gospel of the blessed God. It is doubtful if, after rising to speak, he ever thought of the manner of his speaking. There seemed an utter absence of self-consciousness while he delivered his messages. The marked traits of his preaching, so far as manner was concerned, were his intense *earnestness*, his marked and manifest *sincerity*, his deep and abiding *conviction* as to the truths of the gospel which he preached, and the moral and spiritual needs of those to whom he preached. His voice was musical, sympa-

thetic, varied in its intonations, never monotonous. His gesticulation was unstudied, nervous, and emphatic, to which his vocal inflections corresponded. As with others, his freedom of utterance varied greatly at different times, under the influence of those complex physical, mental, and spiritual conditions with which the unction of the Spirit co-operates. His preparations for the pulpit were usually very thoroughly made, and for the greater part of his life he used manuscript in the pulpit, though not closely confined to it, except in the treatment of special subjects. But in later years he found greater freedom in preaching, and his people found greater pleasure in hearing, by extemporaneous address. This he could well do, as a younger man, less completely fitted by large accumulations of knowledge, experimental and spiritual preparations, could not do. His style of sermonizing was both textual and topical, and the character of his themes both doctrinal and experimental—especially the latter. He was a skillful anatomist of the human mind and heart under the influence of sin on the one hand, and of grace on the other. Few men could give so clear an analysis of the emotions of the soul, or so accurate a portraiture of its varying phases under the operation of the Spirit of God, as could he. Hence he was an able teacher to instruct in spiritual sciences, and a skillful physician to prescribe remedies for the

disorders of the soul. He had learned by his own experience, as well as from the word and the Spirit. The Baptist pulpit of Connecticut has had no brighter ornament, and no abler preacher, within the half century which measured his ministerial life, than Albert G. Palmer.

In the Prayer Meeting.—The prayer meeting was his special delight, providing the spirit of worship was dominant. And few pastors had the ability to make that service so attractive and profitable as he could. His singing there was itself a benediction. He had a voice of marvelous sweetness, flexibility, and power. It was full, mellow, and musical, and very sympathetic. He was a natural singer, and the songs he sang in the prayer room were often as effective as the sermons he preached from the pulpit. The rich melody and tender pathos of his strains, especially in times of revival, were marked and often quite remarkable on a sympathetic and responsive audience. His voice maintained its best qualities very largely unto the end. He loved to sing, and others loved to listen to him. The only difficulty about it in the social meeting was, that he was too much left to perform that important function of worship by himself. Since he did it so willingly and so well, others felt too little inclined to do their part of it. His selections of Scriptures and his comments on them were chiefly along the line of experimental godliness. It was in that service

he came more immediately in contact with the spiritual life of the church, and touched and molded their Christian character. While it is largely true in all churches, it was particularly true under his ministry in all the churches which he had served, that the prayer-meeting attendants were the best developed Christians, the strongest, the most reliable, the most efficient, helpful, and spiritually minded of all the flock. Of that class was a large proportion of the prominent members, male and female, in the church to which he had so long ministered, and in the midst of which that ministry ended.

Among his People.—In the midst of his people he was the true pastor; the shepherd visiting his flock, sympathizing with, counselling, guiding, and feeding the sheep of the fold. He had no taste for promiscuous and gossipy pastoral visitation. Hours that well could be spared he preferred to spend in his study or in the midst of his family. But the sick, the afflicted, the poor, the neglected, found him an ever ready and sympathetic friend. Few pastors visit enough to satisfy a certain class of their members. And many pastors find general visitation irksome, and avoid it as far as possible. He sought to discharge his duty strictly, and to benefit all departments of his ministerial work. The negligent members received his special attention, and, if possible, were won back to Christ and to duty. His deeply and tenderly

sympathetic nature made him a boon and a blessing to the bereaved, the sick, and the dying, and all in affliction. At funerals, his ministry was marked by a touching pathos which soothed, comforted, and cheered the mourners. Delicate in his sensibilities as a woman, tender in his spirit as a child, the manliness of his nature made his sympathies more quick and strong for every object of grief and suffering. Whittier's verse on Sturge would well apply to him:

> Tender as a woman, manliness and meekness
> In him were so allied,
> That they who judged him by his strength or weakness
> Saw but a single side.

He was called from far and near to attend funerals, so adapted and effective were his services on such occasions. Especially when he would sing some appropriate hymn in strains so sad and sweet as to melt the otherwise careless listeners to tears and carry consolation to mourners when all other ministries failed. All classes respected and honored him. With the young he kept young to the last, and they loved while they reverenced him. Not only his own parish, but the entire community, the worldly as well as the godly, confided in and trusted him for his consistent and unaffected piety, his manly and truly Christian walk and life as a minister of the gospel.

Among his Brethren.—In his intercourse with

his brethren in the ministry he was a genial companion, kind, courteous, and fraternal, free and friendly, never cool, reserved, or unapproachable. And yet he never laid aside a becoming dignity, nor, either in conversation or in deportment, was he ever known to transgress the proprieties of the ministerial profession by undignified words or acts. It must be confessed that clergymen sometimes when "off duty," and in clerical circles, not only unbend in cheerful intercourse, but descend to a level which would be considered quite unministerial elsewhere. It was not in his nature to do this, and so no special watchfulness or restraint was needful on his part to avoid it. He commanded the respect of his brethren at all times and on all occasions. In meetings of the various religious organizations, State conventions, associations, and ministers' meetings, in all of which he felt a deep interest, the meetings of which he usually attended, his presence was always welcome and his influence was always felt, and over all of which he was called from time to time to preside. He was not a speechmaker in the popular sense of that term, and usually shrank from the sound of his own voice in public assemblies. He was in no sense a polemic, and avoided controversy. But in any discussion no one detected the strong or the weak points more readily than he. On such occasions of debate he would sit in silence, but in a thoughtful mood,

listening to and weighing all that was said until the whole matter was fairly before his mind, and then rise, and in a few well ordered and transparent sentences state the case as he saw it, and sit down. And others were slow to reply.

He would not enter into debate, and would perhaps make no direct allusion to the previous presentation of the subject on the one side or the other, but touch and illuminate the very heart of the matter. And usually when he closed, others saw it as he did. He was not a debater, and never employed the weapons of the dialectician, but gave his conception of the matter in a straightforward way, with manifest sincerity and a freedom from prejudice which usually won the assent of his hearers. His voice was almost never heard in the great anniversary meetings of the denomination. He was too modest to push himself into public notice, and since these large gatherings are made more the occasion of popular attraction and temporary effect than of calm discussion of grave questions of policy or fundamental principles in Christian work, men are for the most part selected to occupy the platform who can catch the popular fancy and captivate audiences seeking entertainment. A large class of wise, thoughtful, and able men are thus counted out from even appearing before representative audiences on great public occasions, by which means the denomination loses the benefit of much of the wisest and ablest coun-

sel accessible for the direction and management of their great benevolent organizations, unless, as in some cases, and to a limited extent, such men are induced to address the public through the press, as to a limited extent they do. Dr. Palmer sparingly availed himself of this method of making public his opinions, and not half so often as his friends desired that he should. He disliked the physical labor of writing, and still more disliked to appear in any sense in controversy. But when he wrote it was always because he had something to say, and not because he wished to appear before the public. And what he wrote was always to the point, in defense of truth as he understood it, always in a courteous and Christian spirit, and always worthy of a candid and serious consideration. And yet there is a considerable number of his productions in print, and many more in manuscript, equally worthy of public notice.

In his Study.—He was not a book-worm, though fond of books, of the real value of which he was an excellent judge. His library, though not large, contained material of the first quality, of which he had made the best possible use. He used books not to do his thinking for him but to compare his thinking with them. He went about any matter of study which he had on hand, with earnestness, intent to go over it and through it with as much thoroughness as possible. No superficial examination satisfied him, but if in any

case of special moment, he would give the subject as exhaustive an investigation as the circumstances permitted and the facilities at his disposal allowed. It scarcely need be said that his study was a place of prayer, as well as of mental activity. There he held communion with God, as well as with his own thoughts and the thoughts of others, through the medium of the printed page. So far as his preparations for the pulpit were concerned, the Bible was his treasury of truth. Science, history, art, and current life furnished illustrations, but the sacred Scriptures were his authority, as he could best understand them with all the helps at his command. The deductions of science and the theories of scholarship he did not utterly discard, but took them for what he deemed them worth—and of their real value he was a good judge. But he considered the Scriptures their own best interpreters. Whatever doubts or questions arose in private investigations, in the pulpit he preached "Christ Crucified." His purpose was not to perplex and unsettle the faith of the people with questions which could not be answered, but to present to them the things which were settled and sure. His aim was to lead unsaved men to the Lamb of God, as their only hope, and to edify and build up the saints in faith and righteousness. To this end his private study tended and bent its aim. He was a student by nature and a

scholar by practice, and though he made no pretensions to accomplishment in the higher ranges of biblical criticism, yet he was an able theologian and a sound expositor of the word of God, as well as an able preacher of its sacred truths.

As a Writer.—He possessed a fine literary taste. Mention has already been made of his poetic temperament, and of his poetic productions. Though such contrarieties are by no means unknown, yet it is not common for one so much at home by nature and culture in the realm of fancy, and familiar with the literature of the imagination, to be master of the profounder questions of ethics and theology, and competent to discuss with discretion and ability the abstruse subjects of social and civil economies. The fact was, that he possessed a mental penetration which went to the core of a subject to which he gave himself, together with ability to hold himself to its investigation until he understood, at least its main features and bearings, if not all its minuter details. His writings appended to this Memoir will illustrate and verify what has been here said. He used language to express his thoughts, which it did in a clear, concise manner, and in good literary style, but never with a manifest attempt to decorate either his subject or his composition with the figures of speech by the skill of the rhetorician.

For a year during his pastorate in Wakefield,

he was the virtual editor of the "South County Journal," a local paper, and managed it with skill and ability. During a course of years he wrote anonymously a series of "studies" for the "Christian Secretary," the denominational paper of Connecticut, extending to about one hundred articles, all of which were studiously considered, and carefully prepared. They were homiletical, exegetical, expository, and theological, and well deserved republication in a more permanent form. But, unfortunately, the taste of the present age is not inclined to substantial religious reading. During a somewhat heated newspaper discussion respecting the "proper method in missions," which occupied the attention of our denomination some forty years ago, he wrote and published in the "Secretary" a series of ten articles on that subject, which commanded wide attention, and though some of his views differed quite widely from those of many of the denominational leaders at the time, yet the drift of thought and practical policy in missions has been moving more and more toward his position on that question. Various lectures in prose and verse delivered before literary and other associations, and often repeated, are preserved among his papers.

Before the Public.—To the great outside public he was much less known than he deserved to be. His modesty of spirit, and his retiring habits of life, made his personal public a narrow, but an

appreciative one. In matters of denominational interest, religious and educational, he was deeply concerned, and in them all his counsels and endeavors were highly valued and influential, particularly so within his own State. As judged by the standard of popular notoriety, his great sin was diffidence, retirement, and self-depreciation. He held in just contempt the spirit of brazen self-assertion which, without merit, pushes itself into notice, courting a cheap newspaper fame as substantial glory. But he valued the approval of thoughtful and considerate minds, and greatly and rightly prized the commendation of those who could appreciate real merit, and who judged righteous judgment. Some men, at times, in appearing before the public on special occasions achieve brilliant success, at other times a conspicuous failure ; more frequently a respectable common-place. Dr. Palmer never attempted a brilliant success : he had a nobler aim. He never met with a conspicuous failure. He was always listened to with marked respect for his manifest ability in the treatment of any subject, and his manifest sincerity of purpose in the discussion, and for the dignity of his bearing before an audience. His sermons always commanded thoughtful attention, and, at times, they made the most profound impression on his hearers. The public honored him as a public man and a citizen above reproach, who sought to advance the public

welfare by all legitimate means; whose opinion and whose influence weighed on all public questions in the community where he lived. The profound respect in which he was held as a minister of the gospel, gave great weight to his opinions on any matter touching the temporalities of society in which he might be interested.

A Man of the People.—His sympathies were always with the common people. It was the manhood of a man which he respected, not the clothes he wore, the house in which he lived, or the wealth he possessed, The workers and wage-earners, the bone and sinew of society, commanded both his respect and his sympathy. His lecture on "The Dignity of Labor," delivered before an association of mechanics during his first pastorate at Stonington, and several times repeated by request before other bodies, was worthy of the commendations it received, and showed his sympathy with the working masses of society. He sought their improvement, their elevation, the comforts of their homes, and the education of their children. The "classes" respected him, the "masses" loved him, and without distinction of race, color, condition, or age, passed him on the street with tokens of regard, or in an emergency applied to him for counsel, comfort, or aid. He was particularly interested in public schools, and the education of the children. It is stated that on a

certain occasion, when it was proposed to build a new schoolhouse, with enlarged and improved facilities at considerable expense, the means to be raised by taxation, the movement was strongly opposed by a certain wealthy man, who had no children to educate, but who would be heavily taxed for the new house. Dr. Palmer vigorously advocated the movement, and the project was carried through. This wealthy gentleman was an admirer of the pastor, though a member of another church, and it was known he had in his will made a legacy of five thousand dollars in his favor. But in a fit of vexation that he had been opposed on the school question, he cancelled the legacy, declaring that if Dr. Palmer preferred to take sides with the youth and the negroes, he could go without his gift. This incident I believe occurred as stated, though he never mentioned it to me. And so far, as I have reason to believe, he never regretted the advocacy of the welfare of the people, though at such a cost.

The Spiritual Universe Realized. — Though alive to and in vital contact with the moving, acting, living present, few men seemed so completely to realize and live in such sensible fellowship with the unseen spiritual and supernatural realities of the universe as did he. The friends who had lived, and loved, and departed, though "lost to sight," were not simply "to memory dear." To his spiritual apprehension they were

with him still. Spirits and angels, as messengers and ministers of grace, were about him, though not visible, yet as real as the forms of living men in the midst of whom he moved. What to many of us is a suggestion, a hypothesis, a wish, to him was a reality. To him there were two worlds about us in which we live and of which we constitute a part: the material, the visible, the tangible, apprehended by physical sense; and the immaterial, the invisible, and the intangible, apprehended by faith as a spiritual sense. And the latter was the larger, the grander, the more important of the two. He was not wholly peculiar in all this, for multitudes of others hold substantially the same views. But with him these questions had passed the sphere of doubt, or of inquiry, and became settled and controlling convictions. Some who failed to understand him, thought him, almost if not quite, a Spiritualist. But with Spiritualism, as popularly understood, he had no sympathy, and talked and even preached against it as a popular and most pernicious delusion. His spiritualism was of another kind, a part of the constitution of the universe, sanctioned by the Scriptures, ultimating in the supreme ministry of the Holy Spirit, and clearly apprehended only by those who are in the best and broadest sense spiritually minded. It was no hallucination, no mental unbalance of his. No man was more in touch and sympathy with the

actual, practical, moving realities of the life that now is. It was the addition of his broader sympathies open to the grander universe of which the senses take no note, all of which is lost to the great mass of humanity.

Occasions of Spiritual Illumination.—Every public speaker and, peculiarly, every Christian minister knows by his own experience how much easier it is to speak at some times than at others. This is perhaps more manifest when called on at special and unusual occasions, and perhaps without much previous notice, and with little or no opportunity for adjusting thought, or arranging language adapted to the subject. There are times when the speaker is "shut up"; all is dark, dry, and irresponsive, and he can say little, and that not to the purpose; at least in his own estimation. There are other times when thoughts flow like the out-gushings of a fountain. Words come without an effort, and the right words. The voice is under perfect control, adapted to the place and the occasion, is sympathetic and obedient. Ideas are as free as the air, and language as clear as the light. We are too little familiar with the subtle activities of the mind, and the mysteries of psychological science to be able to comprehend, much less to explain, these and similar mental and emotional phenomena.

Dr. Palmer had some striking experiences of this kind, to which he was accustomed to refer

with peculiar interest in conversation with his personal friends. One of the most marked of these was on the occasion of the funeral of Rev. Mr. Dickinson, at Somerville, Mass. Mr. Dickinson was, in a sense, "his son in the gospel," greatly beloved by him. He was a young man of devout and lovely spirit, of fine ability, and greatly useful in the gospel. He died, still young, after a brief illness. Dr. Palmer was sent for to make the address at his funeral. The house was crowded with a stricken congregation and an afflicted community. He said he found it impossible to fix his mind on any leading thought, or any train of reflection suited to the occasion. Everything was dark and forbidding, and he felt that his coming to the occasion must be a failure. But while they were singing the last hymn before the address, this Scripture flashed into his mind with a flood of light: "And Enoch walked with God: and was not; for God took him." For forty minutes he held the audience spellbound with a tide of eloquence born of a spiritual unction, which cheered, comforted, subdued, and elevated the hearers, justifying the ways of God in all his trying dispensations. It was an inspiration, not a preparation. Of course his mind and heart were full of truth and facts, and the Spirit of God gave him utterance. Clergymen from Boston and from the suburbs came to him and expressed the pleasure and per-

sonal profit with which they had listened to him in the very strongest language. No one was more surprised at the result than himself, or less able to explain it. Other similar occasions, scarcely less marked, occurred in his ministry.

A True Patriot.—He was a sincere patriot ; a true lover of his country. He honestly believed it the best country on the face of the earth. And, moreover, he believed there was a divine purpose in its history and in its future. He had no desire to see foreign lands. His eldest son says that his father would sometimes become impatient with him when, after a visit to Europe, he would endeavor to interest him in a narration of some of the remarkable things he had witnessed in other countries. He was restless if asked to believe that any other country could possess superior attractions to this. His sympathies with the ignorant and poor from other lands who came here were broad and deep. But he repelled with just indignation the intrusion of foreigners into our social and political system, with the intention of destroying or transforming our institutions with their anarchy and irreligion. He lamented, as many of us do, the degeneracy of the times in this regard; the introduction into our social and political life of hostile and corrupting influences from abroad, which violates the sanctity of the Sabbath, the purity of the franchise, and the integrity of the public school. And if

not more censurable, yet more shameful, if possible, is the fact that a corrupt and mercenary party spirit in politics panders to and courts these base elements in society, because through the ballot box they are potent factors of personal aggrandizement in the hands of unprincipled demagogues. Thus our national honor becomes tarnished; public office a matter of bargain and sale; all the springs of social and civil life poisoned; municipal offices are filled by strangers who rule over us, actuated by a groveling ambition, but otherwise without interest in or care for our political or religious institutions. All this he saw and lamented, as we do; but without the power to apply a remedy. This *amor patriæ* he puts on record in one of his longest poems, entitled "My country."

> I sing my country, land that gave me birth;
> The brightest spot beneath the sun to me;
> Nor me alone, but so to all the earth.
> Emerging from the night of tyranny;
> Like eastern Magi gazing from afar,
> Westward, on Juda's Messianic star.

His son writes me as follows: "I never knew a man who took a deeper interest in public affairs, or who watched them more intelligently than my father. While he was not a loud-talking abolitionist, he was an abolitionist from the earliest. I think his first vote was cast for Gerrit Smith for president. After the war broke out he

fought (spiritually) in every battle, he sang every Union song, and he rebuked copperheadism and half-hearted Unionism on every occasion. He was devoted to his country with all his heart. To him there was no land like America. Two or three times I offered to send or take him abroad, but he declined, saying, that outside of America there was nothing he cared to see except Palestine, and he was too old to make a journey thither." His love of country has already been referred to. Another extract from his poem, written just after the close of the civil war, shows something of the fire of his patriotic ardor:

I sing my country 'mid the clang of arms,
  Of rattling musketry and cannons' roar,
When horrid war surcharges with its storms,
  The nervous atmosphere, from shore to shore.
And trembling hosts list to the whispering wire,
As if a nation were about to expire.

In such an hour, my country's God, to thee
  I raise my heart; do thou attune my lyre
To strains of loyal song and melody,
  Mingled with faith and hope's celestial fire.
Prophetic of the brightening future, when
The heavens of peace shall shine on us again.

Questions of Moral Reform.—With all questions of moral reform and religious progress which agitated his age and generation, he was in the truest and deepest sympathy. To them he gave his prayers, his advocacy, and so far as he

could, his co-operation. He was not an extremist. In feeling, conviction, and principle he was profoundly a radical; in expression and methods of work he was a conservative. With his temperament, convictions, and poise of mind, he could by this means accomplish the most. He did not lack moral courage for any fight against wrong, but every man has, and must have, his own method of doing his own work. No man can work well in the harness of another. The gigantic iniquity of slavery he hated with the sincere detestation of a New England philanthropist and Christian. He witnessed the great, dark, and bloody drama of its insolent assumption, its armed assaults, and its annihilation. His eloquent and touching sermon on the death of President Lincoln was a strong arraignment of the tyranny of oppression. Also his "In Memoriam" on Lloyd Garrison. Of the equally gigantic evil of intemperance he stood well convinced, while he deplored its disastrous effects. An evil which stands somewhat differently related to the nation's life, but is more widely disastrous to the country in its effects on domestic, social, commercial, and financial welfare than slavery ever was, or in the nature of the case, ever could be. He saw the enormity of this curse of humanity, and did what he could to stay the oncoming tide of desolation. It is but little that any one man can do in fighting against such monster evils, where the depraved

and overmastering appetites of men strike hands in fellowship with the lustful greed for gain of those engaged in the unholy traffic, and care more for the profits of the iniquity than for the homes, bodies, and souls of their victims. For prison reform, for the improvement of homes for the poor, for the elevation of the oppressed working classes and wage-earners generally, for the suppression of Sabbath breaking, gambling, licentiousness, and all forms of social and domestic evil, he had a word of cheer and a helping hand. For the more distinctively religious work of missions he was a warm and effective advocate and helper. The period of his active life spanned the two-thirds of a century of the history of modern missions. And his heart yearned for the Pagan world to be brought to the knowledge of salvation through Christ Jesus.

This brief and altogether imperfect portraiture of a marked, a notable, and a noble personality, may here terminate. True friendship does not deal in extravagant and fulsome eulogy. The world is slow to recognize its benefactors, and even the churches only half appreciate the blessing, divinely given, of able, faithful, and godly pastors. But their record is on high. Nor do they cease to live when the funeral services are ended, and the final benediction dies away at the mouth of the sepulchre and is lost in the silent air. The lives they have lived, the characters

they have formed, the spirit they have exercised, possess a subtle vitality which penetrates the fabric of society, and helps to form all that is purest and best in the great world in which they lived—the great world which will soon forget them, but which will never lose the influence they have exerted. True, no light save that which comes from beyond the stars can dissipate the shadows that fall on hearts and homes bereaved. And to the spirit that hungers for the fellowship and sympathy of a lifetime, no voice answers from the mystic realm, no echo comes back to its cry of loneliness, from the great mystery beyond. And we must wait. Wait a little while. Wait till the morning breaks and the shadows flee away. Then the fairer day will dawn that knows no shadows, and the life that knows no tears. And we do follow after, not sadly; nor shall the hour of victory and of meeting be unwelcome, when the checkered and the changeful present shall be past, and peace and joy immortal shall be the heritage of the pure in heart.

When on my day of life the night is falling,
And, in the winds from unsunned spaces blown,
I hear far voices out of darkness calling
My feet to paths unknown.

Thou, who hast made my home of life so pleasant,
Leave not its tenant when its walls decay,
O Love divine, O Helper ever present,
Be thou my strength and stay!

Be near me when all else is from me drifting,
Earth, sky, home's pictures, days of shade and shine,
And kindly faces to my own uplifting
The love which answers mine.

I have but thee, O Father ! Let thy Spirit
Be with me then to comfort and uphold ;
No gate of pearl, no branch of palm, I merit,
Nor street of shining gold.

Suffice it if—my good and ill unreckoned,
And both forgiven through thy abounding grace—
I find myself by hands familiar beckoned
Unto my fitting place :

Some humble door among thy many mansions,
Some sheltering shade where sin and striving cease
And flows forever through heaven's green expansions,
The river of thy peace.

There, from the music round about me stealing,
I fain would learn the new and holy song,
And find, at last, beneath thy trees of healing,
The life for which I long.

JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER.

SPECIAL DISCOURSES,

SERMONS,

A LECTURE,

AN EXEGESIS.

XVIII.

SPECIAL DISCOURSES.

A DISCOURSE

Delivered by Dr. Palmer, at the one hundredth anniversary of the organization of the First Baptist Church, in North Stonington, Connecticut, September 20, 1843. With an appendix. Published by request.

Deut. 31 : 12, 13; "Gather the people together, men, and women, and children, and thy stranger that is within thy gates, that they may hear, and that they may learn and fear the Lord your God; and that their children which have not known anything, may hear and learn to fear the Lord your God."

"The annals of an oppressed and struggling church," says a distinguished historian, "are far more likely to afford events of powerful interest, than those of a dominant hierarchy; for it is in seasons of distress and suffering, of privation, contumely, and persecution, that the loftier passions of our nature are elicited." It is equally true that in circumstances like these, the strength, dignity, and glory of the *Christian character* is most fully developed, and the purity of a true religion most clearly exhibited. Perhaps the world has not witnessed a brighter illustration of these remarks than the history of the trials, conflicts, and sufferings of our own denomination furnishes, and especially the detailed history of many of our individual churches.

From the slight view we have been able to take of this field, we are convinced that it is rich in all that variety of moral incident and religious association which one might desire as an inspiration to his own feelings, as well as to invest its history with interest and importance.

The historical incidents of many of our older churches, are few and scattered; a single record of their organization, with a few rays of traditionary light, is all that has come down to us from this most interesting period of their existence. Hence, little comparatively can be known of the particular circumstances which gave them birth; of the local influences which called them into being; of the trials, sufferings, conflicts through which they were called to pass. One thing, however, is certain, that if the early movements of our denomination bear but an *ordinary* relation to those which are more recent; if, as is usually the case, persecution and suffering increase in proportion as we go back to the rise of a sect; then, in the circumstances of our incipient organization, there must have been trials and privations of which we can form but indistinct conceptions.

A distinct and general view of these times, based, however, upon correct data respecting the character of affairs in the church, is all that can be obtained. Yet even this, limited as it may seem, will throw much light upon the subject; and if we can succeed in collecting these scattered rays, they may serve as a taper, at least, to guide us along the often obscure path of our early history.

The only record that can be found of the constitution of this church is as follows: "1743, the First Baptist Church in Stonington was constituted; Mr. Wait Palmer was ordained their watchman the same year." But of the names and numbers of its original members, of the churches and ministers who composed the counsel of recognition, we have from the records no information. Indeed, there is an entire blank from 1743 to 1762, embracing a period of nineteen years, about which little can be known, save what can be gleaned from tradition and collateral history. It must be borne in mind, however, that the date which marks the rise of this church carries us far back into the history of our denomination in this country. Though from the banishment of Williams Baptist sentiments had prevailed in Rhode

Island, and were gradually making progress in other sections of the country, yet, "about this time," says Backus, "there appears to have been but ten churches in Massachusetts, none in New Hampshire, none in Vermont, and but one in Connecticut." The First Baptist Church in Groton was constituted as early as 1705; of the immediate circumstances of its origin we have no definite information.

It is, however, worthy of record, that the date of its organization is the same that marked a general combination on the part of the dominant ministry for an increase of power over the churches.

Not succeeding in Massachusetts, the experiment was made in Connecticut with more success. On the death of the third Governor Winthrop, in 1707, they succeeded in electing as governor a clergyman favorable to the scheme. This issued in the construction and establishment of a form of discipline, famous in history as the *Saybrook Platform*. Whether the dissatisfaction arising from this usurpation of power by the ministry in many sections of the State, had anything to do with the origin of the church in Groton, we have not been able to determine.

Still, it is worthy of notice, as illustrating the providence of God, that, at the very time the ministry was seeking to bring to their aid the arm of civil power in the government of the church, God, upon the very soil where this unholy alliance was being consummated, was raising up for himself a people, before whose influence this *Babel* of iniquity should fall to rise no more.

It is, however, to be inferred, that the increase of this church at first was but slow and gradual. During the space of twenty years it appears to have called into existence no kindred organization; this is, indeed, somewhat surprising; but the cause we think is to be found chiefly in the peculiar character of the times. The year 1705 places us near to the early settlement of the country; consequently, it may be supposed that the adjoining towns and neighborhoods were

but thinly inhabited, and hence the facilities for a wide and rapid diffusion of truth, were but comparatively few. In addition to this, the educational prejudices of the people were everywhere hostile to the distinguishing sentiments of the Baptists.

The ministry of the prevailing order had succeeded in blending the ecclesiastical and civil administrations; the Church had sought and formed an alliance with the State, and this unnatural, unholy union, as it always has, produced the most unnatural and unholy effects. Intoleration, persecution, fines, imprisonments, whippings, banishments, and death; these are among the dark crimes which grow immediately out of this illegitimate connection.

Whether the church in Groton felt severely the grasp of this power in the way of direct persecution, we are not able to say. But it is evident, that a body so feeble as this church must have been at that time, could not fail to have been retarded in its progress by an opposition so powerful as that of the Church and State united.

An age that could be induced to sacrifice the great principles of religious freedom, to yield the high prerogative of ecclesiastical administration to a power, from whose tyranny and cruelty it had but just escaped, of all others would be most unfavorable to those principles of church policy which have ever distinguished the Baptist denomination. Men who can be led away by an ambitious, designing priesthood; men who will not take the trouble, nor feel the responsibility of thinking for themselves, are the very last men to renounce *popular error*, or to embrace *unpopular truth;* in other words, the very last men to become Baptists. And that this was the character of the age which we are contemplating, the history of both Church and State, at that period, plainly indicates.

In not a few instances, however, the measure was received with marked disapprobation; and in some cases, met with open and decided resistance. Hence originated a species of

dissent, or *separatism*, from the established order. *Separate* churches sprung up in various parts of the country, retaining all the characteristics of the old organization, yet resisting the encroachments of the ministry, repudiating the union of the Church and State, and refusing the aid of the civil power in the administration of discipline. As a consequence, there arose a kind of sympathy between the Baptists and these Separatists, which in some cases resulted in a *species of union* or *mixed communion;* a state of things most unfavorable to our ecclesiastical purity, and hostile to the advancement of truth. And it is not surprising that the influence of Baptist churches consenting to this injudicious connection was not more widely felt, and their *distinguishing* sentiments no more generally embraced.

In addition to this, the general tone of religious feeling in the prevailing church was exceedingly low; a loose and dark theology everywhere prevailed; the vital doctrines of the gospel were unbelieved, unpreached, and to a great extent, unknown. Christianity existed but in *name* and *form;* and the church, so far from being the congregation of the *righteous*, came emphatically to be the congregation of the *unrighteous*, the repository of error, and the highway to death.

An impure morality was substituted for experimental piety; obedience to the ministry and the magistracy took the place, at least in matters of religious discipline, of obedience to God. Hence a fractious, disputatious spirit prevailed. Men were occupied, not in searching for truth, but in settling questions of civil and ecclesiastical policy; in enforcing and resisting an authority which, on the one hand, was regarded as the safeguard of the church, but, on the other, as illegitimate, profane, anti-Christian. The public mind was hence kept in a state of continued excitability, and the warlike passions of the heart were frequently called out in fierce, unholy collision. Still this state of things, unhappy as it was, was not altogether unserviceable in the cause of truth. Amid

these commotions, men began to be enlightened respecting the true character of Christ's kingdom. In resisting what they were forced to regard as a usurpation of authority by the ministry, they fled to the Scriptures and studied the constitution of the church as therein revealed, and were thence, by a process not very difficult to understand, frequently led the entire length of truth, touching the great question, not only of gospel order, but also of gospel ordinances. Hence, in immediate connection with this state of things, Baptist sentiments were found rapidly spreading, especially in those sections where *separatism* prevailed; so much so, that at one time, as Backus states, it seemed that all these churches would become Baptists. The church, in her eagerness to bind men to her traditions, had compelled them to adopt the Bible as their only rule of *faith* and *practice*, and in so doing cut the cords of ignorance and superstition by which she might otherwise doubtless have held them longer in her allegiance. *But so had God ordained.* The time had come when a purer spirit was to go forth upon the earth in the name of Christianity; when the inward life of the church was to be rekindled and her ordinances in their primitive purity restored. For when we once admit that God has spoken to us in his word, and that from its decisions there can be no appeal, conscience will bind the *Christian* to all its requirements, whether they regard the internal or external life, the inner sanctuary of the church or its outward visible forms and ordinances. A pure Christianity within always secures a pure Christianity without, so far as the understanding is enlightened as to its requirements.

Hence, it is an interesting historical fact, that the more general rise of Baptist sentiments in Connecticut was simultaneous with that glorious revival with which many sections of the State were visited in the years 1741, 2 and 3. It is of this revival that Backus says: "The great change that was then wrought in many minds, was the evident cause of the rapid spread of Baptist principles in our land. The subjects

of that work," he continues, "embraces two ideas which produced this effect. The first was, that saving faith is necessary to give any soul a true right to communion in the church of God; the second was, that there is no warrant for a half-way covenant therein; and as infants are generally in a state of nature when they are said to be brought into covenant, infant baptism expires before these principles." So true is it, as a general thing, that the internal and external purity of the church, rise and fall together. Thus the moment men began to apprehend the *great truth* that living faith in Christ was indispensable to admission into his church, immediately, by a necessary inference they advanced another step, namely, that living faith in Christ was an equally indispensable pre-requisite to baptism; and having gone thus far, the more discerning and conscientious were constrained to go still further, and *renounce infant baptism*. For if faith in Christ be the first step toward membership in the visible church, and baptism the second, then evidently, infants are disqualified for the second, because incapable of the first. It is not surprising that when men began to reason thus, "infant baptism began to decline." So true is it, that reason, under the control of a sanctified heart, always extricates us from the labyrinths of error, and guides us along the plain path of scriptural truth.

It was amid circumstances and influences like these, that this church seems to have had its origin. It was called into life, not by party spirit, not by sectarian zeal, but under the genial influence of a glorious revival of religion; and the great principles of truth which it then embraced, and which from that time it has steadfastly maintained, were elicited under the same benign influence.

During this year, 1743, Baptist sentiments spread with a hitherto unparalleled rapidity. Several new churches were constituted in New England. In New Jersey, Mr. Dickenson, then president of Princeton college, wrote a pamphlet, to arrest, if possible, the progress of a sentiment which was

fast undermining the long established and venerated usages of the prevailing church. But it did not answer the design of its doubtless well-meaning author. "The pamphlet was reviewed by Dr. Gill, an English Baptist, in 1749; and this examination of the subject caused the light to be more widely diffused."

Many converts about this time were made to Baptist sentiments, who were not gathered into Baptist churches; but, obtaining baptism at the hand of Baptist ministers, remained in the communion of the churches with which they were already connected. This state of things, though at first tolerated, continued, as might have been anticipated, but for a short season. For soon it was discovered that the new sentiment had made such progress that it threatened to prevail over the old; and that *baptism*, unless checked, would soon displace *sprinkling*, or affusion, and obtain the exclusive practice of these churches. "Hence a *fierce* opposition was raised against what was called re-baptizing, which was declared to be a very wicked act."

The Separate churches had become a mixed multitude, and, as a consequence, disorder, confusion, and strife, succeeded. Councils were called to settle these increasing difficulties; the first of which was held in Exeter, May, 1753, and a larger one, the year following, in Stonington. In these councils, it seems that the Baptists and Separatists mutually participated; little progress, however, was made in attempting to harmonize elements and principles so discordant. The most consummate wisdom of the ministry and church united, could not strike out a path in which principles and practices so diametrically opposite could meet and harmonize. Nor is this astonishing. For *divine wisdom* had furnished none; and if *they* had succeeded in finding one, it must have been one of those by-paths of human invention which always deviate more or less widely from the plain, straight path of gospel order and practice. The point at issue between the two parties seems to have been this: Those

who did not feel themselves bound to receive immersion, demanded of their baptized brethren, and of the Baptist churches generally, that they should acknowledge affusion, though received by them in infancy, as valid baptism. This of course they could not do, and hence a separation took place in many of these churches; the baptized members withdrawing and forming separate organizations, which soon assumed the exclusive character and standing of Baptist churches. Thus God in his providence was separating the wheat from the chaff, the truth from falsehood, the ordinances of his church from the traditions and commandments of men. Still, however, the leaven of error was not entirely purged out. The light, though shining somewhat more clearly than it had done, was nevertheless intercepted by much of prejudice and passion, and not as yet fully apprehended. So strong were the ties of former associations that many at first could not separate themselves at the Lord's table from those with whom they had been accustomed to walk in fellowship; and though they seem to have been fully aware of the inconsistency of this course, yet relative attachments triumphed at times over principle, and the truth was sacrificed, as it often is, at the shrine of human passion and friendship.

Still this was a point of peculiar tenderness, and was regarded and treated by the churches with a degree of mildness and lenity somewhat remarkable, it is true, but not unbecoming, perhaps, the circumstances in which they were placed. The ministry of this period seem to have been endued with a remarkable degree of wisdom, prudence, and piety. They were men, evidently, whom God had selected and fitted for the weighty responsibilities and arduous work to which they were called; men who were able and willing to take the oversight of the church of God; to guide her amid the perils through which she was passing; to lead her up from the darkness in which she had long been wandering into the full light and liberty of the gospel. Theirs was the responsible work of combining elements; of separating the

precious from the vile; of discriminating between the true and the false, both in doctrine and practice; of collecting, arranging, fitting, and harmonizing materials for the establishment of the church of God as the pillar and ground of the truth upon the foundation of apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone.

They were called upon, not only to preserve the ordinance of baptism, which they had received in special trust, in its primitive relation to the church, but also to cast a mass of mind, just emerging from the darkness of a false theology into the peculiar mold of gospel truth, into the form of sound evangelical sentiment and of equally sound evangelical practice; and of the manner of which, under God, they met this responsibility; of the consummate wisdom, prudence, and fidelity with which they discharged their high and sacred duties; of the correctness of their decisions in most matters of faith, practice, and discipline; the present condition of the denomination, is perhaps the best criterion. For it has advanced to its present state, guided and guarded by those simple principles of ecclesiastical economy in which they so faithfully instructed the churches committed to their charge. And in no way, perhaps, has the wisdom of their successors in the ministry been more happily exhibited than in attempting no innovations concerning these important points of order in the church. Wherever an improvement has been attempted it has most signally failed; both individuals and churches have found themselves constrained to return and retire within the prescribed limits of an *ecclesiastical fellowship, based upon union in the truth as it is in Jesus.* The reason of this is obvious. The light which guided our early ministry in the formation and discipline of the church was the New Testament. This was their law, their canon, their rule of faith and action. They did not study the fathers, or the decrees of councils, or the decisions of synods, but the TEACHINGS OF JESUS CHRIST AND THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES. Here they found the grand model of the

Christian church, or rather the Christian church itself, as constituted and regulated under the immediate teachings of the Holy Ghost; and to this they strove in all things to conform the spiritual temple which they were called to rear. Hence, under their hand the building rose with something of the simplicity and beauty of the apostolic church. It stood out before the world, reflecting in all its prominent features of doctrines, ordinances, and discipline, the light of a pure, primitive Christianity. Let it not be supposed that our veneration for our fathers in the ministry is excessive; we venerate them because they venerated the New Testament; we follow them because they followed Christ. We speak of their religious principles because they were drawn fresh from the fountain of truth, the living oracles of God; we speak of their acts because they were conformable to the precepts of the gospel, and as such are worthy of our perpetual imitation. We admire their spirit, the elevated tone of their piety, their unwavering fidelity to truth, their strict and undeviating conscientiousness, their patient enduring of suffering, and their manly resistance of religious despotism. They were indeed extraordinary men, but were *made so* by the *grace of God;* by the peculiar circumstances into the midst of which they were thrown; by the responsibilities they were called to sustain; and above all by the sufferings, privations, and persecutions which they were called to endure. That they were great men we do not claim, at least in the ordinary acceptation of this phrase; and yet, if purity of mind and character, deep and ardent piety, strong attachment to truth, correct and comprehensive views of the gospel, a thorough acquaintance with the word of God, together with an ability in illustrating and applying the same, in an extraordinary degree successful in winning souls to Christ as well as in edifying the church of God; if these qualifications in any degree constitute *true goodness*, and *true greatness*, then *were they* truly good and truly great men. They were men of a plain, common education, yet of strong, vigorous intellects, of

sound, practical sense; and hence brought to the study of the Scriptures that peculiar artlessness and simplicity of mind so essential to a right understanding of the word of God. Books they had none. The Bible alone was the man of their counsel, their great and almost exclusive study; and hence they became mighty in the Scriptures, thorough and correct expounders of the doctrines and precepts of the gospel.

They were unlearned in many of the modern modes of interpretation, untaught in many of the nice distinctions of a speculative theology, but were not therefore, we imagine, the *less evangelical* in their sentiments, the *less successful* in their ministrations.

They seem to have received the Scriptures in their most plain and obvious meaning, without seeking to conform them to their prejudices, or to bend them to the support of a denominational creed. Indeed, they had no such creed; and if prejudice at any time they had, it was a prejudice consequent to and dependent upon a diligent and prayerful study of the Bible, and might therefore be supposed to be in harmony with truth. Doubtless, like all other good men in similar circumstances, they were not aware of the greatness of the work they were performing, of the far-reaching influence of the principles which they had embraced and were laboriously inculcating.

Hence the absence of all policy and design in their proceedings touching the future. They left truth where the apostles left it, not to be transmitted by means of creeds and heartless subscriptions, but to be handed down from generation to generation in the experience of those who should embrace it, trusting in God that the line of the true spiritual priesthood would continue unbroken, and the church thus be perpetuated to the end of time.

We are disposed, however, to trace all this to the superintending providence of God, to the guardian influence of the Holy Spirit. To us it seems evident that God, through the agency of these men, was preparing to give the world a

practical illustration of *that great truth* which the church has ever been so slow to learn, namely: That the *Bible understood*, the *Bible believed*, the *Bible loved*, the *Bible practiced*, is the *best*, the *only* safeguard to ecclesiastical purity.

We have thus sketched, with as much brevity as justice to the subject would permit, the history and character of the age that witnessed the rise and organization of this church. It remains for us now to present in detail some of the most important facts and events of its own history.

The first record subsequent to that of the organization of the church bears date of October 3, 1762. It records a petition of the pastor to travel and preach the gospel wherever God might open the way before him. The church gave him full liberty to go and improve his gift wherever God should call him. The next record, of October 17, 1764, is of a somewhat painful character. It describes very briefly, a course of discipline which the church was constrained to take with their pastor. The charges against him were as follows: first, that he had given occasion to the people to think that he was actuated by a hireling spirit, in demanding a stated salary for his services; and second, that he professed to have an internal dismission from the church, and in virtue thereof pronounced the church dissolved. Touching the first charge, he plead guilty and confessed his error; but as to the second, he firmly maintained that his internal dismission from the church was from heaven. On November 2, 1764, the church, as the records state, after much labor, resolved to withdraw the hand of fellowship from their pastor. The ground of this was that he persevered in declaring that the church was dissolved, and that he had an internal dismission from heaven. The next record, of October 3, 1765, presents the doings of a council called in relation to the case of Elder Palmer. The names of the council were Nathan Avery, Timothy Whightman, Simeon Brown, Joseph Ayer, Richard Williams, Amos Burrows, Joshua Birch, Eliezer Brown. The doings of this council

furnish an interesting specimen of the manner in which they transacted business of this character in these early times. First, they offered prayer to Almighty God for direction; second, they inquired of the church for what purpose they had called them together; third, they proceeded to hear a relation of the matter from Elder Palmer, and also a statement of facts from the church, after which they adjourned to a private dwelling and came to a decision in the following manner: the moderator, probably Elder Timothy Whightman, proposed to the council the following questions: First, had Elder Palmer a right to withdraw from the church in the manner and form he did? Answer in the negative. Second, has Elder Palmer, by withdrawing from the church, rendered himself worthy of discipline? Answer in the affirmative. They then proceeded to advise Elder Palmer to reconsider his conduct, and admonished him in the following manner: "Dear brother, is this agreeable to your ordination vows and the solemn charge committed to you? If the church, as you say, was in a languishing condition, then where was your love; where your pity; where your faithfulness to God, to Christ the Good Shepherd, to the sheep of his pasture and of your charge? We entreat you, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the bowels of love, that you repent and turn again to God, and to the church of your charge, lest a broken covenant and the blood of souls rise against you." To the church they spake as follows: "Dear brethren, our bowels move with compassion and sympathy toward you, while we behold you as sheep without a shepherd; but we trust the great Shepherd of the sheep will not forsake you. Cry after your elder, cry to God for him; who knows but God will restore him to you? We advise you, brethren, after you have wholly discharged your duty to him in this respect, and he continues incorrigible and impenitent, that you depose him of the ministry and the charge committed to him in his ordination. Finally, brethren, farewell; the God of peace be with you. Amen."

At a meeting held on the twenty-fifth of the same month, the church voted their concurrence with the doings of the council, and directed their clerk to send a copy of the same to Mr. Palmer. Still, however, the final act of exclusion was delayed, in hope, doubtless, that their pastor, whom they seemed to have truly esteemed, might return to them; but in this they were disappointed. A letter is found on record, bearing date of January 9, 1776, addressed to Mr. Palmer; in which, after reviewing the course of discipline pursued, they proceed to say: "And now in covenant faithfulness to you, our once beloved elder, and in honor to the laws of God's house, we exclude you from our fellowship, and depose you from the pastoral office committed to you at your ordination." We have copied these proceedings at length, because they furnish an interesting illustration of the principles of order and discipline by which this church, in its infancy, and the denomination in general, at this early period, were controlled. It proves that our churches at the beginning were well governed, well disciplined; that nothing like looseness of sentiment was permitted to obtain even in the ministry. It furnishes also an early precedent worthy of our special regard, showing the specific character and design of councils. This council was exclusively advisory. It attempted to exercise no authority over the church. It simply gave its advice and left the church free to receive or reject it. It was convoked, not to *legislate*, but to *advise;* not because the *authority of the church was not adequate* to the *deposing* of a *minister;* but because the church, in a case perhaps unprecedented, at least of peculiar intricacy, felt the need of counsel; and we scarcely know which to admire most, the prudence of the church in asking advice, or the high and Christian-like integrity of the council in giving it. Having performed *their duty*, the council dissolved, leaving the church to pursue an independent course of discipline with their offending pastor. The executive power was in the church, and having, with the aid of a council, ascertained

the law of God's house in this case, they proceeded in due time to put it in execution. How unlike this was the discipline of the prevailing church of that period. Here is no dominant priesthood, "lording it over God's heritage," with the strong arm of civil power enforcing its decisions; no arrestments, fines, imprisonments, or whippings; but the church peaceably assembling from time to time, calmly deliberating upon a most important and trying case, calling to her aid the wisdom of an esteemed and intelligent ministry, and finally proceeding, in the exercise of her high and independent prerogative, to put forth her decision of excommunication. This verily looks like the primitive order of Christ's kingdom. Here are no synods, no presbyteries, no councils invested with legislative power; but the church acknowledging no *head* but *Christ*, and *no law* but his *revealed word*, seeking with due caution and prudence to *ascertain* its decisions in a given case of discipline; and, having done so, faithfully executing the same.

Of Mr. Palmer's character little can be known, except what may be inferred from the record of these proceedings, and this, we fear, may be less favorable to him as a man, as a Christian, as a minister, than strict justice would demand. From all we have been able to gather respecting him, we should judge him to have been a man of strong and fixed prejudices, immovable in his decisions, and somewhat austere and censorious in the exercise of his ministerial functions. He reproved with severity and, without consulting consequences, followed out what he regarded as truth and duty. Still his piety seems to have been of a mystical cast, which often, as in the case of his confession, led him to renounce as wrong what was evidently right, and to hold as right what was evidently wrong. In one respect, it must be conceded that he was in advance of the age—at least, without doubt, in advance of his church—namely, in relation to ministerial support. It is well known that the views of many of our earlier churches upon this subject were exceed-

ingly defective. And the putting forth of such claims as Mr. Palmer seems to have urged, would be likely to produce a collision. Most of our members at this period came out from under the oppression of an over-reaching ministry, and thence regarded with an undue jealousy, whatever might have the appearance of this evil.* No record was kept of the members received under the ministry of Mr. Palmer. We cannot, therefore, judge very correctly of its comparative worth. It, however, embraced a period of twenty-two years, and was, in this respect, at least, worthy the imitation of the ministry of the present day. I cannot pass from this connection, without remarking that the pastoral relation of this period seems to have been regarded as peculiarly sacred. Both the church and the ministry viewed it as a permanent, and in ordinary cases, as a changeless relation. They knew nothing of that system of trade and speculation in the ministry in which the churches have of late years so extensively engaged. And the ministry knew as little of that ambitiousness of place and station, which at the present time is one of its most unlovely features. Mr. Palmer, in the early part of his ministry, traveled somewhat extensively, penetrating the adjoining towns and counties, preaching the gospel wherever God in his providence opened the way before him. He seems to have labored with some degree of success in the town of Tolland; and while there baptized the celebrated Shubael Stearns, and shortly after assisted in his ordination. This was about the year 1751. In 1764, he also baptized Simeon Brown, the first pastor of the Second Baptist Church in this town.† From all these circumstances, it may, we think, be fairly inferred that Mr. Palmer was a man of no small moral worth, notwithstanding the unhappy termination of his ministry. We are disposed to regard the whole subject in the most favorable light on his part, to do justice to his character, and to relieve, if possible, the darkness in

* See Appendix, letter A. † See Appendix, letter B.

which the latter part of his life was shrouded. Whether he was restored to the church cannot be determined, for the records are again broken till 1781, before which time, doubtless, the aged man had gone to his reward.

Still, as the first pastor of this church, as exercising his ministry in a period which tried men's souls, as laboring extensively for the diffusion of truth, as a faithful coadjutor with our earliest ministers in the great work of gathering and planting our churches, as having baptized and assisted in the ordination of two men of such eminent worth, we are constrained to reverence his name and memory, and regard him as worthy to be enrolled among those noble men with whom he was sometime associated. He doubtless had to struggle with many embarrassments of a pecuniary character. A large proportion of his time was devoted to the work of the ministry, and with the scanty allowances furnished him by his church, it was but natural that he should become discouraged and unhappy in his official connection. His great error, after all, seems to have been one, which at that time was quite prevalent in these parts, namely, that internal impressions were decisive in all matters of duty and discipline. The church and council doubtless acted wisely in purging out this delusion; but the church was sadly behind its duty in not giving its pastor a comfortable support. Had this been done cheerfully, the connection might possibly have continued unbroken and happy until his death.

Mr. Palmer was succeeded by Mr. Eliezer Brown, a member and licentiate of the Second Church in Stonington. In this capacity he seems to have served this church for the term of four years. He became a member of this church, 1769, and was ordained its pastor, January 24, 1770. The ministers who assisted were Joshua Morse,* Nathan Avery, Timothy Whightman, Simeon Brown, and Solomon Sprague. Mr. Brown entered upon his ministry under circumstances some-

* See Appendix, letter C.

what discouraging; the church was in a scattered, languishing condition; yet his call to the pastorate seems to have been unanimous, and he was thence successful in gathering and uniting the scattered sheep. Indeed, he seems to have been a man whom God had eminently fitted for the station he was to occupy; and he came to his work at a time when his services were greatly needed. We cannot forbear to notice, in this connection, the prudence and deliberation with which the church proceeded in the choice and call of a pastor, as well as the becoming modesty and patience with which the candidate *awaited* that choice and his consequent call to ordination. A period of four years is permitted to elapse between the dismission of their first pastor and the final choice and settlement of his successor. During all this time the young candidate preaches to the church. The church watches his steady demeanor, his ripening gifts, his growing worth; an attachment commences; they become convinced of his soundness in the faith, and of his ability to expound to them and their children the word of God. This lays a foundation for a connection between the pastor and people of a long and happy continuance; and under ordinary circumstances, as in this case, to be dissolved only by death. Here is nothing of that haste and rashness in the choice of a pastor, which marks the decisions of many of our churches at the present day; and nothing of that prematureness of ordination under the burden of which the denomination at this moment groans.

The ministry of Mr. Brown embraces a period of twenty-five years. The first years of his ministry do not appear to have been distinguished by any unusual success in the enlargement of the church. From 1770 to 1781 there is an entire blank in the records, about which no definite information can be obtained. In 1784, according to a manuscript copy of the minutes of the Stonington Union Association,*

* See Appendix, letter D.

the church numbered ninety-seven. From this period down to the year 1791–2, the additions by baptism were few. The ministry about this time was much engaged in adjusting the affairs of the denomination in general; in regulating the practice of the churches touching their ecclesiastical fellowship; in settling questions of discipline, etc. Councils were frequent, and the pastor, deacons, and more prominent members, were frequently called away; still, during all this period, strict discipline was evidently maintained and the church lived in peace and harmony. The office of deacon at this time was filled by Mr. Allen Breed. He was probably among the earliest members of the church, and perhaps was chosen to the office at its organization. From all that can be gathered concerning him, he seems to have been a good man and to have filled the office of a deacon well. October 6, 1784, Nathan Randall was chosen deacon, and on the 8th of December following, was publicly ordained. In August, 1785, Reuben Palmer was set apart to the work of an evangelist.* From this date to 1788, nothing occurs of special interest. A few scattered notices of baptisms, together with the ordinary cases of discipline, is all that appears on the records. From the published minutes † of the Association, we learn that in 1789 the church numbered one hundred and two. The year 1790 brings us toward the close of Mr. Brown's ministry. He had scattered long the seed of truth, and as yet had gathered but little fruit; but the promise of God cannot fail; his word cannot return to him void. It had been faithfully preached and must accomplish the thing whereunto it is sent. The seed had been sown and could not be lost; bread had been scattered upon the waters, and after many days it must be found. Accordingly, in the year 1791, Mr. Brown began to witness the fulfillment of these promises.

We may well suppose that he was often discouraged and

* See Appendix, letter E. † See Appendix, letter F.

left to exclaim, in the language of the prophet, "Who hath believed our report?" His ministry is drawing to a close, and the good man almost concludes that he must be gathered to his fathers without beholding the salvation of God. But not so; at this advanced period of his life, the faithful minister receives the commission, "Thrust in thy sickle and reap, for the harvest is fully ripe." This year, 1791, they enjoyed a little refreshing; the Lord began to set them free. The year following, the heavens dropped down fatness; the clouds had long been gathering and now poured down a "plentiful rain, whereby God's inheritance was confirmed when weary." In this revival, the church received an accession of fifty-two, making its whole number one hundred and fifty two. This revival, in its steady progress, was evidently in harmony with the age in which it occurred. Society then was not made up of tinder, steam, and vapor, but of solid granite, and consequently was not easily moved. But when taken by grace from the quarry of nature and placed in the great spiritual temple, it lay perhaps the more firmly upon the foundation. It had at least sufficient weight of character to settle and ground it in the truth. If the temple did not gather to itself so many lively stones, they were perhaps more massive, better polished and fitted, by a long preparatory course of labor, for the place they were to occupy. Men did not then understand the process of reducing solid rock to gas and of blowing it off in vapor; but the present age, in its advanced light and knowledge, understands all this. The mighty agencies of nature are brought under its control, and why not a corresponding improvement in controlling the agencies of grace? Why not bring so much spiritual light, and heat, and power, to bear upon the world as to melt away at once its flinty hardness and icy coldness?

Such is the *philosophy* of some men. But the voice of inspiration is: "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord." Doubtless, religious revivals will be in some measure conformable to the peculiarities of the

period in which they occur. But we hold it to be a *great* and *fundamental truth,* that, in whatever age, or under whatever possible circumstances occurring, pure revivals are always produced by the *sovereign, independent, uncontrolled power of the Holy Ghost.* Such was the faith of the fathers of the Baptist church ; and the revivals which occurred under their ministry were instrumentally developed by preaching based upon this foundation, and molded into this peculiar form of doctrine.

October 25, 1792, Peleg Randall was ordained an evangelist. He was baptized November 19, 1784. On this occasion, the pastor of this church, with much propriety, gave the charge. Thus the mantle of Elijah falls upon Elisha. The old pastor, worn with long labor, is about to be taken up to his reward ; but ere he departs he must pour the sacred oil upon the head of his successor. He must call him from following the plough to assist him in the duties of his infirm and declining age, and thus prepare him, when he shall have departed, "to feed the flock of God, and take the oversight thereof." This was the *old way* of teaching divinity to the rising ministry, and it was surely an *excellent,* if not the *more excellent* way.

In April, 1794, Nathan Chapman was ordained deacon. This year, also, the Association held its twenty-second anniversary with this church. On the last day of the session Abel Brown, a member of this church, was ordained to the work of the ministry. The right hand of fellowship was given by the aged pastor. These were among the last acts of his life. God was dealing with him in mercy, leading him gently and pleasantly down to the tomb. He had seen the salvation of God ; laid his hands upon the head of his successor ; had met the churches in convocation at his own place of worship ; and now what remained but that he should depart in peace. Accordingly, on June 20, 1795, he fell asleep in Jesus. Mr. Brown was possessed of but little education, yet of strong native powers ; of vivid thought

and conception, and of a flowing, rapid delivery. He was justly esteemed as among the most eminent of the preachers of his day. There are a few still lingering among us who remember him well, who in the days of their youth sat under the last part of his ministry; but they are fast retiring, like the aged trees of the forest, and soon the last of this fraternity will have been numbered with the dead.

Mr. Brown was succeeded in the pastoral office by Peleg Randall. Mr. Randall, as a preacher, was very much unlike his predecessor. His talent was not, like *his*, popular and attractive. His discourses were cool, deliberate, instructive; but were usually wanting in the glowing warmth and animation for which his revered predecessor was so highly distinguished. Nevertheless, he was at times impassioned, ardent, and impressive in his delivery; often becoming toward the close of his discourse deeply moved himself, and hence deeply moving others. His ministry was much occupied in matters of discipline. The church had become somewhat enlarged, embracing a wide extent of territory, requiring much diligence and care on the part of a pastor to take the oversight of such a flock. Whether Mr. Randall was more strict in discipline than Mr. Brown, we cannot say; but it is certain that the records during the period of his ministry give evidence of a commendable fidelity in this respect. Although no general revival was enjoyed under his ministry, yet it was by no means unfruitful in the conversion of souls. The church was gradually increased from year to year. His ministry, like his character, was distinguished by no remarkable elevations or depressions; a steady, onward movement, if not rapid, yet sure, characterized alike both the pastor and his people. It is delightful to observe the permanency of the pastoral relation of these times, and the reciprocal affection by which it was sustained. A pastor once settled, there was no thought of change, unless called for by the special voice of providence. Here is a long and peaceful union of twenty-three years; the pastor going in and out

before his people from Sabbath to Sabbath ; the youth coming up under his watchful care till he comes to be regarded as a father in Israel ; and the words of truth, as they drop from his lips, are esteemed as the oracles of God. Mr. Randall closed his labors with this church October 8, 1813, and soon after removed to the State of New York. His person, character, and manner of preaching are fresh in the memory of many now before me. He was respected and loved by all who knew him.

In 1813, the church found itself destitute of a spiritual guide. It, however, did not continue long in this condition. God, in his providence, was arranging circumstances to lead them to the choice of the man whom he had anointed to this work. In January, 1814, they received a request from the First Church in Groton, to appoint delegates to assist in the ordination of Jonathan Miner. The ordination accordingly took place February, 1814 ; and on the twelfth of the same month the church resolved to call him to preach to them for one year. The call was accepted, and Mr. Miner took up his residence with them the following spring. His labors were immediately followed by a precious revival. During the first month of his ministry, between thirty and forty were admitted to the church by baptism ; and within the period of three months fifty-six were baptized. This, for the times, was a very extraordinary accession. There were then no protracted meetings ; no special efforts to secure a revival, otherwise than as they were called forth under the special enkindlings of the Holy Spirit in the bosoms of Christians. *Then* the cloud of the divine presence went *before* the congregation, and the church *followed*, and pitched her tent wherever that cloud rested. Revivals then usually originated in this way: Christians would be quickened in an unusual degree under the preaching of the gospel ; a few, at first, would begin to realize deeply their obligations to God, and to be burdened in spirit for the salvation of sinners ; and would pour out their souls in warm

and thrilling exhortations, following up the preaching of their pastor with earnest appeals to the impenitent. Immediately succeeding this state of feeling in the church, a general seriousness would be observed, especially in the youthful part of the community. The usual gaieties attendant upon this period of life would be laid aside; the house of prayer would become the place of resort; and then the downcast look, the falling tear, the half-suppressed sigh, would plainly indicate the presence of the Holy Spirit; and from such a period, the work would generally move on with increasing power, "till as many as were ordained to eternal life believed."

Many of the present members of this church were gathered in from this revival. By *them* it will never be forgotten; and they will never fail to cherish an affectionate remembrance of him who was the instrument in leading their youthful hearts to Christ. Thus, at the very commencement, God manifested his approbation of the choice of the church, by crowning the first efforts of their pastor with abundant success. The beginning, however, is but a specimen of the entire course of his ministry. Revival follows upon revival, up to its close. True, there were years of comparative unfruitfulness. This of course must take place in a parish like this, where there is little change of the inhabitants, and where the same families reside year after year. At the close of 1814, the church numbered one hundred and eighty-five.*

The next general revival under the ministry of Mr. Miner commenced in the autumn of 1822. The record of baptisms commences with September 28th, and extended to April 6, 1823. Most of the members now in the meridian of life, were received at this revival. Its hallowed seasons of prayer, its baptisms and communions, are still in fresh and sweet remembrance. Then we often sang, as we still sing, when our thoughts wander back to this bright and happy period:

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* See Appendix, letter G.

"Jesus sought me when a stranger
Wandering from the fold of God."

With many of us, these were the days of childhood. But they left an impression upon our hearts which I trust neither time nor eternity will ever efface. It was the first bright spot in our existence, the enkindling of the spiritual life within us, the lightening up in our young, yet benighted minds, of the hope of immortality. Of the numerous subjects of this work, the greater part remain until the present time, but some have fallen asleep.* By this revival the church received an accession of fifty-one members, making the whole number two hundred and thirty-one.

February 14, 1824, Deacon Nathan Chapman died, having been a faithful member of the church, forty years. He came like a shock of corn fully ripe to the harvest. Of him it may truly be said, that he "used the office of a deacon well, purchased to himself a good degree and great boldness in the faith." He was succeded in the deaconship by his son, Smith Chapman, who was ordained May 18, 1826.†

In October, 1828, another awakening commenced, and continued through the following winter. It was not, however, as extensive as the one preceding it. Twenty-seven were added by baptism.

In 1830, the old house in which the fathers first worshiped having become dilapidated, and in many respects inconvenient, the present neat and commodious house was erected and dedicated to the service of Almighty God, with appropriate religious exercises. The sermon was preached by Elder John Gano Whightman.

In the latter part of the summer of 1831, another revival commenced, from which twenty-five were gathered into the church, making the aggregate number two hundred and thirty-two. We have now come down to the close of Mr. Miner's ministry as the pastor of this church. It terminated

* See Appendix, letter H. † See Appendix, letter I.

March 15, 1834, embracing a period of twenty years; and, though briefer than any of his predecessors, yet it appears long when placed by the side of our modern system of pastoral itinerancy. From its rise up to this period, the church had enjoyed, from year to year, the steady, unbroken ministrations of the pastoral office. During ninety-one years it had but four pastors, and under their labors had advanced from a state of the most extreme feebleness to comparative strength and prosperity.*

The ministry of Mr. Miner, compared with that of his predecessors, was very successful. This may have arisen, partly from the increase of population, and partly from a more general diffusion of a revival spirit in the churches, toward the close of his labors.

His preaching, however, especially as embracing a compass of twenty years, was very effective. His discourses were rich in doctrinal, experimental, and practical truth, commingled and combined in a manner unusually interesting and instructive. In his doctrinal views he was thoroughly evangelical and, like his predecessors, decidedly Calvinistic. His sermons were often marked by a range of thought and strength of sentiment truly astonishing in a man of so limited literary advantages. It hence required close attention, at times, to follow him; and on this account he was regarded by some as dry and uninteresting, but to the attentive, thinking hearer, he was always instructive.

That he had imperfections, is doubtless more than probable; but even these were constitutional, rather than moral; occasional, rather than habitual. He was subject to a depression of mind which induced a distrustfulness, painful in the extreme to himself, and sometimes embarrassing to his brethren. But from this he would soon recover, and exhibit his wonted cheerfulness and usual good nature. "He was a good man, strong in the faith," at times "full of the

* See Appendix, letter J.

Holy Ghost," and under his ministry "much people were added to the Lord."

The year following the dismission of Mr. Miner, the church enjoyed another season of refreshing; forty-five were received by baptism. During the years 1834–37, the church was destitute of a pastor.

In the autumn of 1837, another awakening commenced, and as the fruit of it, forty precious souls were gathered into the fold of Christ. In the absence of a pastor during these years, "the oversight of the flock" devolved chiefly upon the deacons, namely, Samuel Peabody and Smith Chapman; and of the fidelity with which they met this responsibility, the prosperity of the church while under their care is the best proof. During the year 1838, the pulpit was supplied by Rev. Benjamin N. Harris; in 1839, by Rev. Cyrus Miner. April 1, 1840, Rev. Charles Randall became the pastor of the church; under his ministry during this year, thirty-six were added by baptism.

During the year 1842, Mr. Randall being absent, the pulpit was chiefly supplied by Rev. William Flint. Under his ministry, thirty-five were admitted to the church by baptism.* June 17th, of this year, 1843, Mr. Randall returned and resumed the pastoral charge.

We have thus taken a hasty glance at the history of this church. Commencing with its rise, one hundred years ago, we have followed it in its progress down to the present time. We have seen it small at first, struggling with popular prejudice, proscribed by the civil law, yet rising and gaining strength under the pressure of all this opposition.

We have marked its steady, onward course, as we have traveled down through succeeding generations, till at length we find that the leaven of truth, hid a century since in a few faithful hearts, has widely diffused itself throughout the community, and is still on every side extending. How marked

* See Appendix, letter L.

the difference between that period and this. Then the Church sought the protection of the State, and the State assumed to be the guardian of Christianity. But now the church claims alliance alone with her great SPIRITUAL HEAD, lives, advances, triumphs, "not by might nor by power," but by the indwelling "Spirit of God." Then Christian *baptism* was scarcely known in these parts, or known only to meet with persecution from the prevailing church. Now it prevails to a great extent in all denominations, and multitudes are buried every year in the likeness of the Saviour's death. Then there was but one Baptist church in this town, two in this county, and but three or four in this State. Now there are in this town five Baptist churches, and in the State, one hundred and eight. Then Pedobaptism everywhere prevailed; now it is rapidly passing away. Then a few scattered churches of our faith were found in Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, and New Jersey. Now they are everywhere found, embracing the largest population of either of the prevailing denominations in the United States. We speak not of this boastingly; as a denomination we have nothing whereof to glory.

Our fathers simply preached and practiced the truth, and left it to work its own way and win its own triumphs; and in proportion as men have ventured to read and think for themselves; in proportion as the authority of the New Testament has prevailed over the authority of the church and the ministry; in that proportion have the distinctive sentiments of the Baptist church been embraced.

The great question now to be settled is the same which has ever been pending: whether God or man shall be supreme; whether human or divine authority shall be regarded; whether the word of God or the word of man shall be authoritative; whether GOD shall legislate for the church or the *church legislate* for *herself*.

This question has all along agitated the world, and will continue to do so till Christians, casting off all alliance with

vain traditions received from *the fathers*, come fully to the Bible and bow to its authority. The light which a portion of the evangelical church has refused to receive, because reflected from a point repulsive to its sectional prejudices, it will nevertheless be constrained to follow, or strike hands with those who deny the exclusive authority of the Bible in points of faith and practice, and wander back amid the labyrinths of human traditions to Rome itself.

God hasten the day when we shall all come to the unity of the faith, "having one LORD, one FAITH, one BAPTISM, one God and Father of all, who is above all and in all."

In view of the past, we are led to exclaim, "What hath God wrought!" Surely he that is mighty hath done marvelous things. His mercy is on them that fear him, from generation to generation. He hath showed strength with his arm; he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts; he hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree.

The history of this church illustrates the efficiency of our peculiar form of government. That government is strictly congregational—*strictly independent.* Each church controls itself, administers its own discipline, receives and excludes its own members, chooses and calls to ordination its own pastors; disciplines, dismisses, and *deposes* them by its own independent authority. It *may* ask the advice of other churches, but is not *bound to do so.* It may convoke a council *for counsel,* but for nothing further. The executive power is in the church; the discipline must be its own; and from its decisions there can be no legitimate appeal. The voice of a majority of the *male members* of a Baptist church, must, in all cases of discipline, be decisive.

Such, at least, are the principles by which this church in its government has ever been controlled; and few churches, it is believed, during the same number of years, have enjoyed more internal quietness and harmony.

In closing, we can but remark that we are forcibly re-

minded of the extreme brevity of life; of the transitory nature of all earthly relations, religious as well as social and domestic. "The fathers, where are they? and the prophets, do they live forever?" The peculiar services and associations of this day answer no. The children and the children's children are here; but the fathers with their whitened locks, and the prophets with their hoary heads, where are they? Alas, with but a few exceptions, they are gone, all gone! But a few years since they were here, meeting the high responsibilities, and discharging the important duties which we this morning have been reviewing.

Soon we with them shall have passed away. Another century will have rolled by; another congregation will be here gathered, and other lips will be employed in detailing the history of this church through another ONE HUNDRED YEARS.

What the commencement of that history shall be is put within your power, my brethren, to determine. Standing as you do at the opening of another century in your history, will you not lift up your hearts to the God of your fathers, and say, in the language of inspiration: "Let thy work appear unto thy servants, and thy glory unto their children, and let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us, and establish thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands, establish thou it?"

APPENDIX.

A.

An anecdote has come down to us which may throw some light upon the different views entertained by the pastor and people on this point. It was the custom of this church, it seems, though opposed to paying a stated salary to assist their minister by making him presents of grain and other necessaries of life. On a certain time, one of the brethren, not

wholly unmindful of his duty in this respect, laded his beast with wheat and proceeded to the house of his pastor. But the good pastor who, in this instance, at least, seems to have been more nice than wise, replied that he could not receive it as a gift, but would take it if it might be regarded as his due; whereupon the brother, with as little regard to charity as the pastor had to policy, abruptly turned homewards, carrying back with him his wheat. It is not strange that such austerity of principle and manners on both sides should have produced unpleasant collisions.

B.

Mr. Brown, though unbaptized, had for a number of years been a deacon of the open communion Baptist church in Westerly, R. I., under the pastoral care of Stephen Babcock. They walked together in harmony for some years, till a division arose in the church about what was then called the divine testimony; the pastor and a certain portion of the church maintaining that all questions of discipline were to be settled by certain impulses and impressions, and the deacon with the other party maintaining that such questions were to be decided by the word of God and moral evidence. The spirit of delusion, however, in regard to the divine testimony, prevailed; and Deacon Brown, with his adherents, withdrew and formed the Second Baptist Church in this town.

C.

The life and times of Joshua Morse are intimately connected with the early history of this church. The year following its constitution, we find him preaching in this town with evident tokens of the divine approbation; yet encountering strong opposition from the clergy of the established order. Though a youth, his ministry seems to have been distinguished by the strength and manliness of riper years. His manner is said to have been unusually commanding and impressive, and warmed with such a glow of feeling as often

to dissolve his congregation to tears. Zealous, ardent, impassioned, bringing to his ministry the freshness of religious experience, with a heart burning for the conversion of souls, it is not strange that the people flocked to hear the gospel from his lips. Nor is it strange that the jealousy of the dominant ministry was excited, or that the arm of persecution was stretched out when we remember the character of that ministry, both in its civil and religious relations. On the one hand, it was sentimentally opposed to evangelical piety, and on the other, from its alliance with the State, it felt itself called upon to resist all innovations upon the established forms of worship. It was, perhaps, as pure as a ministry could be associated as it was with the State; as little inclined to persecution as any ministry would be, which might, if it would, bring to its support the power and penalty of law. Still, it is historically true that it was strongly opposed to evangelical doctrine and experimental religion. Men were then educated for the *ministry* as a *profession*, without a previous preparation of heart and call thereto by the Holy Ghost. It is not strange, therefore, that spirituality languished. What little was still living, lived in the bosoms of the older members who had enjoyed the benefits of a purer ministry. The rising generation was coming up destitute of all experimental and practical piety, and what was worse, was coming into the church in this state.

In this state of things, it is but natural to suppose that the lighting up of the flame of a glorious revival would produce a concussion in the religious atmosphere, and wake into collision the great antagonist principles of moral truth and falsehood.

Mr. Morse was among the number of those faithful pioneers who shared most largely in the trials and sufferings of this great religious conflict. Stonington appears to have been the field of his earliest labors, as it certainly was of his earliest sufferings. At that time, this was the only Baptist church in this town. It is, hence, more than probable that

he often preached to this people. There was also a small meeting house located a few miles north of the village of Pawcatuc, where the Baptists and Separates were accustomed to unite in worship. These were dark and troublous times, when the little flock of Christ, persecuted by the nominal church, were constrained to seek out for themselves a retreat where they might build their altars and offer up their spiritual sacrifices of praise to God. Here, we are told, these faithful *men of God* were accustomed to deliver their messages of grace with that *unction* so peculiar to the evangelical ministry of that day.

The preaching of Mr. Morse in Stonington, was attended with success; a revival of religion in the vicinity of this church was in progress when he was arrested and carried before the magistrate. While the trial was pending, the wife of the magistrate is said to have besought him with tears, not to give judgment against so innocent and holy a man; but the influence of the clergy and the clamors of a set of bigoted gentry, who declared that his preaching was not according to law, prevailed; and he was sentenced to pay a fine of twenty shillings, or receive ten lashes at the whipping post. The fine he could not pay, and he was taken to the place of punishment; but while the constable was preparing to inflict the stripes, Mr. Morse is said to have addressed him thus: "Well, my friend, I suppose you must do your duty, but remember that when you strike me, you strike one of God's dear children," The simplicity and tenderness with which he spoke drew tears from the stout-hearted man, and he refused to execute the barbarous penalty, pronounced the law unjust, reproached the court for cruelty, and with a truly noble generosity, paid the fine, and released the innocent sufferer.

On another occasion, as he was preaching, a clergyman came in, put his hand upon his mouth, and commanded a man who accompanied him to strike him.

At another time, while preaching in the south part of the

town, two men rushed in and with violent blows brought him to the floor. When he had recovered a little, he looked upon them and said, "My friends, if you die natural deaths the Lord hath not spoken by me." The word of the Lord was not in vain. Both perished in the deep.

At another time, while engaged in prayer, he was knocked down, dragged by the hair down a flight of steps into the street, and was there beaten in a most inhuman manner. A gash on his face was laid open so deep, that he carried the scar to his grave.

On another occasion, the house where he was preaching was surrounded by a gang of the elite and fashionable of the town, who had bound themselves by an oath that they would kill him whenever he came out. His wife and friends entreated him with tears not to commit himself to the infuriated rabble. But he replied, "What mean ye to weep and to break my heart!" Accordingly, he went out, and finding the mob armed with clubs, he lifted up his hands and began to pray for his enemies. The result was, they were confounded and subdued, and some convinced of their wickedness in persecuting so good a man, begged his pardon and retired.

We speak not of these things in this place to enkindle resentment, much less to excite an unholy prejudice toward any portion of the existing evangelical church, but as matters of history; as incidents full of interest to ourselves, and of instruction to others.

It is surely a matter of no small importance to *us* to *know minutely* these incidents of our early history—these sufferings through which our fathers passed in procuring for us the high immunities of religious freedom, in transmitting to us in their purity the precious doctrines and ordinances of the gospel.

They were engaged in a mighty struggle with a *dominant*, but *nominal* church. They fought the battle well, achieved a glorious victory, and we enjoy the fruits. But let us never

forget that the weapons of their warfare were *spiritual*, and were, therefore, mighty through God to the pulling down of the strongholds of Satan, both in Church and State. It was by a simple "manifestation of the truth, commending themselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God," that they obtained these splendid victories. "Through *faith* they overcame the world, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, and turned to flight the armies of the aliens."

In despite of all opposition, Mr. Morse continued his labors in this town with great success; the truth prevailed, converts were multiplied, and the feeble church was strengthened and increased.

D.

In 1782, is found the first record of appointment of messengers to the Association. Yet, as appears from the manuscript minutes of that body, it held its fifth annual session with this church, October 2, 1777.

The Association was formed in Lyme, October 7, 1772. At its session in 1775, in Groton, the pastor of this church was chosen moderator. The primary design of the Association, seems to have been to settle certain existing difficulties, and to unite the churches upon some general principles of faith and discipline. Hence at their first session they recommended to the churches to adopt the English Baptist confession of faith, and the minutes of the following year show that it was generally complied with.

They say as follows: The delegates made returns that the churches generally acquiesced in the doings of the last Association, namely: "Not to covenant and build with Congregational members that hold to the practice of infant sprinkling, nor to commune with them at the Lord's table;" and also to adopt the English Baptist articles.

In the minutes of the same year the following record is found: "Some mention was made that Elder Eliezer Brown

had a member in his church that communed with those who were only sprinkled for baptism, which was a grief to the Association, and they requested Elder Brown to let his church know that they requested a reformation in this matter." Yet no notice is found of this in the records of the church. It was doubtless an exception to their general practice, though it is by no means certain that the church did not, during a few of the first years of its existence, allow this *mixed communion.*

E.

Mr. Palmer at this time resided in Preston, and maintained public worship in his own house. He gathered a small congregation, baptized a number of individuals, and placed themselves under the watchcare of this church. There is now in Preston a flourishing Baptist church.

F.

It is interesting to notice the doings of the Associations of these times, as they throw light upon the prevailing sentiments of the churches relative to many interesting questions.

In the minutes of this year, the twelfth item is as follows: In answer to a question proposed by Joshua Morse, respecting the validity of baptism administered by a person who had never been himself baptized, nor yet ordained, it was replied, that under the present circumstances of the church such baptism is deemed null and void. In 1790, the Association met with the Second Baptist Church in this town. The introductory sermon was preached by the venerable Isaac Backus, from 1 Sam. 22 : 1, 2.

G.

In October, 1816, the Legislature of Connecticut passed an act entitled an act for the support of literature and religion; the design of which was to distribute to the various sects a certain amount of surplus revenue.

February 1, 1817, as the records state, the church met

for the purpose of expressing their opinion concerning this act, and after some consultation, unanimously agreed in disapproving it; and passed several resolutions, which were forwarded for publication to one or more of the public newspapers in the State. The law went into effect. But this church, true to the great principles of our ecclesiastical policy, resisting with a becoming jealousy all overtures from the civil power, persevered in their hostility to the act.

Hence, March 11, 1820, the church and society met and passed the following resolution: Resolved, That we do not wish to receive our part of the money granted to the Baptist denomination by the Legislature of this State.

We admire this stern integrity, this indomitable fidelity to the great principles of religious purity and freedom. This church knew too well the baneful effects of State patronage, to be tempted into so unholy an alliance. The history of her early sufferings therefrom was not entirely forgotten, and though there might be no *apparent*, no *real* danger, yet would she not be *tempted* to violate in practice one of the most vital principles of her religious constitution.

H.

We cannot forbear to mention in this place, the name of Ralph I. Brown. He was baptized September 29, 1822. He early devoted himself to the work of the ministry, had entered upon a course of study, when his life was suddenly terminated, October 27, 1833. The particulars of his brief life, and of his happy, triumphant death, have been sketched with vivid truthfulness in a little volume by the Rev. Bradley Miner.

I.

It has always been the custom of this church in the ordination of deacons, to have them examined by a council, concerning their religious experience, views of doctrine, etc. Nor can we regard this as unnecessary. The office of a deacon is *responsible*, *influential*, *important*, and men ought

by no means to be admitted to it, of whose soundness in the faith we have not the most satisfactory proof. It is believed that one prolific source of difficulty in our churches is to be found in the hasty, informal admission of men to this responsible station.

If anywhere in the church we need men of strong minds, clear heads, and *good hearts*, we need them here. It has thus far been the good fortune of this church to have men of this stamp in this office.

A SERMON

Delivered in the First Baptist Church, Stonington, Ct., on the occasion of the National fast, September 26, 1861, by Rev. A. G. Palmer.

Ps. 122 : 6.—Pray for the peace of Jerusalem.
Ps. 137 : 5.—If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning.

These passages seem to me not only pertinent to the occasion which has called us together, but suggestive of reflections befitting the exciting times through which we are passing. Jerusalem was the capital of the Hebrew commonwealth. It was this that made it so precious in the eyes of the royal poet, and so dear to the heart of every loyal Israelite.

By general consent, these and kindred passages have been interpreted as the utterances of a fervid love for the church ; as the impassioned avowals of that invincible fidelity and centralizing affection by which the Christian is bound to the fellowship and communion of God's people. And this interpretation is doubtless within their spirit and lawful use.

In the Jewish economy, the civil and religious polities were united. In its earlier history, the government was a pure theocracy, administered by a divinely appointed mag-

istracy, as in the case of Moses and Joshua, and the first judges and prophets. And, when at length, in answer to a depraved proclivity to be conformed in their political organization to the idolatrous nations around them, God in judicial anger gave them a king; still the religious element was so positive and absolute in the throne, that faith in God and loyalty to the government, or piety and patriotism, became convertible terms.

An Israelite indeed, in whom there was neither religious nor political guile, was one that "feared God and honored the king," and preferred the peace and security of his country above houses, lands, and fireside comforts; in a word, "above his chief joy."

When Jerusalem was besieged by enemies, every true Israelite dropped his mattock or forsook his flock, and seizing his javelin or spear, turned his face and footsteps toward the sacred city, exclaiming, "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning, and let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy." The love of country is everywhere the same, whether under the administration of an Hebrew shepherd king, or of the citizen chief of democratic America; and in proportion to its civilization and moral culture, everywhere equally fruitful in an unselfish and heroic devotion to the popular weal.

Let us then briefly review the history of this overshadowing national adversity which puts us into such lively sympathy with these avowals of the word of God, and makes the Bible almost equally the text book of the soldier and the minister at the altar; of the camp and battle-field; of the church and pulpit; and of like authority in questions of civil as of ecclesiastical interest.

A few months since the national flag was struck down from one of the strong places of the nation's defense; the national honor was insulted; the national strength challenged; and the very life of the nation threatened at its

capital; not by the insolence of a foreign foe, but by a *sectional rebellion.*

But in this dark hour of parricidal madness and intestine peril, from millions of lips came forth this impassioned asseveration of loyalty, "If I forget thee, O my country, let my right hand forget her cunning."

The high and the low; the rich and the poor; the learned and the unlearned; husbands and wives, parents and children, without distinction of class or sex, from decrepit age to infancy—all were moved by one impulse, all swayed by one controlling passion—the love of country.

There is said to be in the physical economy a latent concentration of reserved force and strength, of which we are never conscious till some extreme exigency demands its exercise and stimulates its action. It is so with some of the strongest impulses of our social and moral nature.

For a time, all love of country will seem to be lost under the shifting currents and chafed and agitated surface of political intrigue and party strife; but in the crisis of national danger this reserved force of patiotism is evoked and rises up like Samson, to overwhelm the treacherous Philistines with slaughter upon slaughter. Doubtless all this is as it should be. Like all great controlling forces, patriotism is developed *when needed*, and comes forth in *quantity* and *intensity* equal to the occasion.

Electricity is not always seen in the flashing lightning, nor heard in the crashing thunder; but it pervades meanwhile the heavens and the earth, and when its purifying power is needed, it goes forth upon the tempest and the storm.

The love of parentage is not always *intensely excited*, but in the hour of sickness or suffering, it watches with angelic tenderness and fidelity around the couch of infancy and childhood. So with the love of country. Its seat is deep down in the heart; but like water of the hidden abyss, stirred only by some violent convulsion, when once in motion it is

as restless as the surging deep. The echo of the first guns against Sumter was the knell of all party spirit and strife throughout the loyal States.

The flashing of the startling intelligence along the wires that the war had actually begun, was like the blast of Barak's trumpet upon the mountains of Israel; and millions of freemen sprang to their arms and demanded the liberty to avenge the insulting treachery. Never in the history of any people was there such a total reversion of popular feeling and sentiment; never such an outburst of wounded and indignant patriotism; never the manifestation of such an invincible resolve to wipe out the reproach, and atone at any sacrifice of property and life, for the flagrant wrong. Nor was it the madness of acerbated pride or blinded passion that ruled the hour; it was the intensely excited, but righteously indignant answer of loyalty to treachery; of outraged patience and forbearance to the precipitate perfidy and reckless temerity of treason.

Up to this point, men throughout the North, in strong majorities, were anxiously looking for some peaceful solution of our difficulties. They were divided and sub-divided in opinion, from the widest extremes of party fanaticism on either hand, as represented in the abolition gospel of Musical Hall, or in the servile gospel of the New York "Observer" and "Journal of Commerce." It is not denied that men, and cliques of men, of the rabid and belligerent type, were everywhere to be found. It is conceded that there was a large class, silently but keenly sensitive to the swagger and menace of the slave power; but the prevailing feeling, as abundantly shown at our local elections, was for an honorable peace—indeed, peace at almost any price; and so strong was the tendency in this direction that we began to fear that country and government and national honor would be offered up as a whole burnt offering to the moloch of another shameless compromise.

When, therefore, the word went abroad that Sumter was

to be evacuated as a strategical necessity, national men yielded in silence; but every expression and attitude showed that the whole head was sick, and the whole heart faint with disappointment and discouragement. A large and respectable wing of the political press, however, regarded it as a masterly stroke of "*peace policy*," which was to crush out secession and bind Virginia and the other border States in decided allegiance to the Union.

Some of the leading administration journals labored hard to convince the South that Mr. Lincoln was *par excellence* a conservative man, and that his administration would enforce all the constitutional securities of the "peculiar institution," as well as dutifully regard the most extreme implications of the "fugitive slave code."

But to all this, the slavocratic regency replied, "That their controversy was not with Mr. Lincoln, or with the presumptive character of his administration. It might be all that was claimed for it—conservative, generous, and just as the possibilities of the case would allow; but the election had demonstrated that under the *Yankee rule of majorities*, the balance of power had passed from the South into the hands of the North. The North had become a unit, or in Southern verbiage, sectional; the empire of suffrage was therefore lost to the South; and as she could no longer rule, so she scorned to be ruled, and would therefore at all hazards go out of the Union. To this issue she had been looking for more than a quarter of a century, and was fully resolved now to consummate it."

Well, this was candid, manly, and evidently truthful. The ground of this controversy has all along been the federal compact. The genius of the government is freedom. Freedom is national; slavery exceptional and local. After a struggle of years, freedom asserts its legitimate supremacy, and assumes the control of empire.

All this is but the logic of the federal compact, an organic necessity, a constitutional law which administrations had

power to modify, but no ability to change in its more ultimate workings. The leading statesmen of the South saw this, and boldly struck for an independent confederacy. It is a shallow view which refers this conflict of years to mere political ambition, or sectional jealousy and hate. Calhoun was no demagogue; he was a man of profound philosophical thought, and foresaw the "irrepressible conflict," and the inevitable triumph of freedom over slavery, under the constitutional provisions of the federal Union.

Calhoun is dead, "but he yet speaketh," and his doctrine is the animating spirit of this rebellion. Indeed, one can almost hear his fiery eloquence ringing through the legislative halls of the South, controlling her councils, and electrifying the hearts of her people from the Potomac to the gulf of Mexico. It is true—slavery, under the most favored conditions, can never keep pace with freedom; freedom is youthful, fleet-footed, immortal, a child of the skies. Slavery in every way is its antagonism. Two such opposites could not be expected long to walk in harmony; the wonder is that they should have kept company so long. The federal compact did not anticipate it. It designed that slavery should die—gradually and quietly to be sure; yet that *it should die.* The history of all our earlier administrations proves this, and it was worse than silliness or political pedantry to deny it. The South concedes it, and says, "Don't attempt to whitewash us with the promise of forbearing and conservative administrations. The federal constitution is against us and we abjure it. We will separate peaceably if you will let us, but forcibly if we must. We have made the experiment, and learned to our cost that slavery and freedom cannot exist together. The one must exterminate the other." Than which nothing is more evidently true.

But to resume the record of events. *Sumter* was not allowed a peaceful evacuation on any honorable terms. It must surrender under penalty of bombardment or starvation. Its gallant commander with his Spartan band is not allowed

to retire unless he strike down the hated *stars and stripes*, and yield his sword to traitors. The result was a heroic defense; a surrender from sheer exhaustion and famine, and a resurrection of the old republic to fight over again the battles of the Revolution. This shameless breach of peace and faith annihilated the spirit of party, and made the loyal part of the nation one—the people and the government a unit—so that with truth it could be said that we who but a few days before "seemed to be no people, were a people," and that "a nation" if not literally "born," was yet *resurrected* and regenerated "in a day."

But if this *were* a question of might against right; of the stronger against the weaker; of the oppressor against the oppressed, then however strong we might assume to be in material forces, and however confident of a speedy victory, still there would be a certainty of a final defeat, for in the end the right is sure to gain the day. I do not believe in the atheistical apothegm that Providence is always found on the side of the heaviest guns. That would falsify the record of the Revolution, and no small part of the world's history in the struggles of right against wrong, and the providential deliverances of the oppressed from the oppressor. The advances of right, if slow, are sure; the gains of truth are never lost; the stream of freedom never flows backward; never wastes. The light of social and civil liberty must "shine more and more unto the perfect day."

If therefore the government had not the right in this matter, I should be rather depressed than elated by the passing demonstrations of popular loyalty to its measures of defensive and *subjective* warfare. Or if the government had transcended its powers, or violated in any way its federal relations, and the war was one of despotic assumption against the constitutional sovereignty of the States, there would then be an apology for resistance, and loyalty, if a duty, could never be a spontaneous inspiration. But every one knows this is not so.

The storm of popular indignation that followed the bombardment of Sumter, making the heart of the people throb as the heart of one man with loyalty, and sending its fires coursing through every artery and vein even to the extremities of the republic—tightening every nerve, contracting every brow, and compressing every lip of man, woman, and child, from the lakes to the Potomac, and from the Atlantic to the Pacific, with the fixed resolve to put down this rebellion, proves that it was a flagrant breach of faith, a shameless sectional perjury. In every legitimate movement, the South has always had strong political alliances in the North. She could calculate, as she did, with certainty, for nearly half a century back, upon any amount of Northern co-operation, in every question involving either her ambition or interest. Indeed, the history of the government is, to a great extent, the history of Southern administration and Southern policy; the North yielding to her claims, and passing over to her hands governmental responsibilities and immunities, satisfied ourselves with the fruitful gains of agricultural, commercial, and manufacturing industry, or with the privilege of working hard and growing rich. The South has had the army, the navy, and the government. The North has held the plough, drove the loom, and swept the ocean. Her seamen have not been commodores and midshipmen, but captains and boat-steerers. Her landsmen have not been diplomatists, heads of departments, and clerks, but merchants, mechanics, and farmers.

In all these matters of legitimate preference, the South has been allowed to engross her own choices, and generously aided therein. Even the "peculiar institution," through partisan alliances, has received from the North a very kindly consideration.

At the indignation meetings following the brutal attack upon Sumner, the leading Republicans were careful to say they did not mean any special indignation or disrespect for slavery. Who gave the South the odious fugitive slave law,

and then came home and told Massachusetts that she must "conquer her prejudices," or in other words, barter her conscience to keep the peace and save the Union? and New England obeyed him for the passing hour, and the Union was saved. It was New England's noblest son, the nation's diplomatic king—the immortal Webster.

In the face of historical data like these, who will presume to say that the South has not all along had alliances in the North equal to all the exigencies of political strategy and governmental control. Even down as late as the opening of the last presidential campaign, the South was strong in Northern affinities, and nothing was wanting for the continuance of the Southern regimé in the government but the integrity of the Democratic party. Had she kept that citadel of her strength, she might have been supreme in our national councils to-day. But she saw the growing strength of the North and West; the rapid and sturdy development of freedom, despite all the checks imposed by her long continued control of federal resources; that the genius and spirit of the constitution, by whomsoever administered, was freedom, and could therefore never be effectually subsidized to the perpetuity and propagation of slavery, and that nothing remained under the impending logic of events and closing up of long accumulating issues, but either to strike for a reconstruction of the government or force a rupture and separation.

Accordingly, it is now frankly acknowledged by the leaders of the Rebellion, that the election of Mr. Lincoln, so far from being the cause of the separation, was simply its occasion; the convenient and successful time for its inauguration. Had Mr. Douglas, or any other than their own sectional candidate been elected, the result if delayed, would have been finally the *same*. Indeed, it is now well understood that the Republican victory and the election of Abraham Lincoln, was a *coup de etat* of Southern politicians for precipitating the revolution. For this end, they seceded

from the Democratic party, abjured it, and sought and procured its defeat.

Such, in brief, is the history of the Rebellion. With what success it has been prosecuted, and what its prospects are, the record of the past six months and its present status will show. If its proportions and the desperate energy by which it has been maintained have exceeded our expectations, its results have without doubt sadly disappointed theirs. Their splendid visions of independence and empire are not yet realized. It is found to be not quite so easy a matter to break up a government and extemporize a nation as was at first supposed. And we, on our part, have learned that when treason has been allowed to reach the proportions and assume the compactness of an organized faction, and to appropriate by stealth to its use the ordinance, fortifications, and defenses of a country, it requires something more than a constabulary force to put down the insurrection.

The magnitude of this conflict is best indicated by the lines of battle on either side stretching in parallels with the Potomac from the Chesapeake to the Mississippi. And what will the end be? Alas, who can say.

While we have unwavering convictions of the justice of our cause, and believe that we are "on the Lord's side," because on the side of freedom, civilization, and humanity, and are therefore expectant and confident of victory in the end; yet what intermediate reverses and sufferings we shall be called to pass through, no one can foresee. We are beginning to learn that success, even with the advantages of a righteous cause and the overshadowing protection of a just Providence, is yet the result of ample preparation, stringent discipline, patient waiting, and of enduring courage and heroism. The great trial of faith and patriotism is still in the future—in that severe, and it may be, lengthened discipline by which Providence designs to try our loyalty, and confirm and consolidate our national character.

God creates nations; puts them upon probation; subjects

them to discipline, and educates them for the great ends of his wise and beneficent government. For this purpose he leads them into the mazes of the wilderness, thrusts them into the desert, shuts them up between the mountains and the sea, or presses them into narrow passes of moral and religious conflict where principles must be tested, integrity tried, and fidelity to his authorship manifested and awarded. "The nation that will serve me, I will honor; but the people that will not serve me shall be utterly destroyed."

The stability of States, not less than the salvation of individuals, is suspended on obedience to God. And therefore it becomes us devoutly and intelligently to inquire: What are the teachings of Providence in this fiery ordeal? what its reproofs? its admonitions? its warnings? its counselings? its requirements? And in the light of these, what our national failings, frailties, and sins? It has long been painfully evident to observing minds that we were rapidly maturing for the corrective retributions of heaven, and that unless God departed from his usual fidelity and severity in his dealings with nations, he would soon confront us with the decided indications of his displeasure. Under the corrupting power of an unparalleled material prosperity, in the easy and rapid accumulation of wealth, and the indolence and profligacy thence arising, we were fast losing sight of the true ends of life, and were sinking into the slough of a debasing sensualism, where all Christian restraint and obligation, as well as all allegiance to truth, right, duty, humanity, government, and God were being lost sight of and disregarded. As a consequence, our whole civilization, and with it, in a popular sense, our religion, was becoming gross, sickly, effete, and we might add in truth, apostate, dead. The decadence was manifest in all the relations of life, domestic, social, and civil; in the household, the neighborhood, the State, the Church; in business exchanges; in the political caucus, and not unfrequently in the parish and pulpit. And everywhere in about the same descending ratio.

Official responsibilities and places of political trust were becoming matters of purchase and trade, wholly irrespective of character or ability, from the president to the village *postmaster;* from a foreign minister to the chairman of a town-council. Indeed, the whole realm of politics had become so demoralized that men who retained any lingering regard for honor or conscience, turned away equally in disgust and from self-defense. In the more public relations of society, equity, right, and merit were seldom allowed a hearing; availability, success, wealth, the almighty dollar—these were the highest tests of character; the standards of social and political orthodoxy, and in not a few cases, the most acceptable qualifications for the immunities of ecclesiastical standing and fellowship. But from this deadly slumber, from this gross and sensuous lethargy, Providence has timely awakened us, if not to save us individually, yet to preserve and renew the national life.

As God, from the very borders of Canaan, turned Israel back into the wilderness till that perverse generation perished, and then gave that goodly land to their children, of whom it could be said, that they were "holiness to the Lord"; so we trust he will reserve our goodly inheritance of freedom, purified and improved by this baptism of suffering and blood, as the portion of our children and our children's children forever. It is surely not without some moral, and we will hope, beneficent end, that we are so suddenly called to pass from the light of as brilliant and luxuriant a prosperity as any people ever enjoyed, to the darkness of an adversity as fearful in its foreshadowings as any people ever endured. For no affliction can be more blighting, no calamity more withering, and no curse more desolating, than an internecine war.

Henceforth, till this war is finished, our homes and firesides, our places of business, workshops, and farms, with the luxuries, embellishments, and comforts thereof, must be exchanged for the severity and hazards of a campaign of

carnage and blood. But whatever may be the issue of our arms, it is evident that this conflict will not leave us as it found us. From necessity, under the administration of the camp and battle-field, we are in a transition state, and we can but hope that the change may be to a higher plane of national existence, and more worthy, enduring prosperity. When we have crushed out this Rebellion, and vindicated the honor and integrity of the government, as with God's permission we shall, we will find, I trust, that in the bitter struggle, convictions will have been eliminated, and lessons of political wisdom gained, which rightly used, will be the fruitful germs of a purer national faith and higher civilization.

One of the most hopeful and proximate results of the conflict, if not already secured, is a more consolidated and perfect nationality. The idea of a family of nations, or of thirty-four independent States revolving around the federal centre in voluntary harmony and sisterhood, may be very poetical and beautiful, but is a political myth and falsehood nevertheless. The whole doctrine of State sovereignty, as involving the right of secession or neutrality, is a miserable heresy, and must pass away. We must become one nation, not a community of nations; one State, not a confederacy of States. The national powers must be sovereign, not simply "first among equals"; supreme and alone in its supremacy. And the man who will not swear allegiance thereto, above and against all opposing claims of State or county, or town or borough, where he may chance to have had his birth, must be held as unworthy of American citizenship, and branded a traitor. This sectional fealty must be exterminated, root and branch, or there will be no security to national institutions or national existence. From the lakes to the gulf, from the Atlantic to the Pacific, we must be one nation.

Another important lesson of the crisis is, that government is of divine appointment; an ordinance of God;

not remotely by distant implications, but directly and positively; as much so as the church and the ordinances of religion. Until this becomes a practical conviction, stimulated and made authoritative under the sanctions of religion, government and law will have little of sacredness and control, save what is secured by physical constraint. But how slight is our regard for the divine ordination in government. Who thinks of yielding to truth, or honesty, or conscience, or God, any place in the political caucus or the pending election? Indeed, it has been assumed that religion was too sacred for these temporalities, and should confine itself to things spiritual and eternal. In this way, the whole domain of civil responsibility and suffrage has been made *Godless;* and the *ballot*, that most sacred of all earthly trusts, become a source of popular venality and corruption. A man has no more right to trifle with the *ballot* than he has to sell his conscience or soul, and he who would do the former would do the latter, provided he could find a market for so worthless a commodity.

Such are some of the moral implications and lessons of this conflict. We are beginning to learn that integrity and veracity are of some little value in the State; that a religious reverence for the sacredness of the oath is not altogether worthless in the responsibilities of civil power; that "the fear of the Lord," and a regard for the Sabbath may have some slight relation to political wisdom and military strategy. These indications are certainly hopeful, especially as the pledges of that higher moral status, to which I trust God intends, though it be "by terrible things in righteousness," to exalt us.

But the struggle is not ended; it is simply begun. What then is our duty at this time? I answer: it is a patient, enduring, unflagging, unflinching, united loyalty to the government in this trial of its authority and strength. Pray, what will life be worth to you or your children, if this government is to be destroyed or exchanged for the despotism and

oppression of the slave power? You say that it shall not be. And yet I tremble when I remember that God is just. The sin of slavery; aye, that dark sin! Is it not a national sin? Have we not bowed down to it and worshiped it, and again and again offered incense upon its bloody altar? Has not the wealth of the North, to a great extent, if not equally with that of the South, come directly from the wrongs of Africa; from the toil and sweat of the slave? Have we not attempted to ignore all responsibility for this stupendous evil, and to purchase its commercial fellowship by political servility, till the South, not without reason, came to believe that interest with us was above conscience and patriotism, and that they could at pleasure purchase our complicity in any treason, however revolting, by the simple promise of more fruitful financial affiances? And would it be strange if Providence, in its impartial rulings, should decide that liberty and property, and life itself should be put in jeopardy by an evil which we have been but too willing, indirectly, to cherish and sustain? Is not God saying to us, "You will not regard the cry of the poor; you 'passed by on the other side,' and said you had no responsibility for the wrongs of your brother. But, now, the same despotism that enslaved and crushed him threatens you and your children, and you must fight or be slaves yourselves. You would not help the oppressed against the oppressor, and now the oppressor, grown insolent through your complicity, spurns your tolerance even, and you must fight or wear the manacles you have in all good conscience, and in great political faith, allowed to be fastened upon him."

This is our punishment, and I hope it may prove to be its complement. The fearful crisis, this tragedy of treason and blood, is the fruit of our dallying with temptation; of a temporizing, partisan policy; of bartering political integrity and the national faith for the worthless prestige of administrative power and favor. Disguise it as we will, the negro is the cause and occasion of this conflict. Around him, in all his revolting stolidity and ignorance, the contest is raging. For

him, or for the great principles which his social bondage and degradation represent, the dark lines of war are drawn across a continent. For him, a nation is divided. For him, men of the same stock, speaking the same language, united for years in commercial interests and government, and in many cases of the same neighborhood and family, separate and stand face to face in battle array. O, you never meant to fight for the negro! no, indeed!

When the haughty slave power struck down Charles Sumner, all New England was in a blaze of resentment, and politicians seizing the fitting opportunity, created a political party, but they cared as little for the negro as the negro cares for himself. And even now, mingling in all this strife, there is, I fear, very little of humane or Christian sympathy, and less of principle for the wrongs of bleeding Africa. But we are under the impressment of Providence, drafted into this service, and we must fight the "battles of the Lord," or be traitors to God and man. God has given us an honest president and wise national councilors, for whom we thank him. In the dark hour of the Revolution he gave us Washington, and now we are hoping he has given us his successor in a youthful leader, whose courage, like Washington's, is only equaled by his prudence.

"Pray for the peace of Jerusalem!" Verily! But the unity of the nation is essential to its peace; its wholeness and integrity essential to its prosperity. The doctrine of peaceful secession, breaking a nation into fragments at the will of a disaffected minority without an effort on the part of the government to maintain its authority, would be the end of all civil order, and the inauguration of sedition and anarchy.

But, whatever may be the final issue, it is worth almost the painful ordeal through which we are passing to know that we are a people; that we are a nation; that we have a government and a country; that patriotism still rules the national heart; that we are not cowards, and that *when freedom is imperiled, we fear not death.*

A SERMON

delivered in the First Baptist Church, Stonington, Ct., on the Sabbath evening following the assassination of Abraham Lincoln. By A. G. Palmer, D. D. This sermon was repeated by special request, in the Baptist Church of Noank, the following Sabbath.

Isa. 59 : 9.—"We looked for light, but behold obscurity."

Under the deep gloom that to-night oppresses every heart, I fear I shall not be able to find words, or command an utterance, befitting the occasion.

Indeed, at a time like this, when the voice of God is heard "out of the thick darkness" saying, "Be still and know that I am God; I will be exalted in the earth,"—speech seems almost a sacrilege.

The nation is black with astonishment; terror-stricken and dumb at the ghastly tragedy of treason and crime in the Capital.

Our pulses freeze, our breath congeals, and our flesh grows damp and cold with an icy sweat as the frightful message breaks from the wires, "The president has been assassinated." Fearful as we knew the crises to be through which we were passing; depraved, reckless, desperate, and bloodthirsty as we knew the forces to be with which we were contending, still no one thought that in the nineteenth century, in a land of ripened civilization, and under the genial nurture of Christian institutions, a crime like this was *possible*.

This is no time for recrimination; no time for words of bitterness, or for partisan impeachments; but under the deep shadow of this great sorrow, under the intense agony of the national heart, there is but one conviction, one verdict, the verdict of a profound and ominous silence. This national assassination—this attempted butchery of the

government! you *know* what it is. It is the murderous recoil of the slave power; the deadly thrust of treason at the nation's life; this it is—nothing less; nothing else; and when the nation shall speak, it will as with the voice of God pronounce accordingly, and decree the utter extermination of this "mystery of iniquity."

Yes, it was treason, it was the Rebellion, it was the infernal wickedness of slavery that sped the ball and plunged the dagger of assassins for the life of Abraham Lincoln and Wm. H. Seward. And for what? Because they had fiercely and stubbornly assailed slavery? No; for their record neither charges them with this offense, nor accredits them with this virtue. But it was because these men were the embodied life of the nation, entrusted with its authority and power; set for its defense and charged with the employment of its forces for the suppression of insurrection and the punishment of "evil doers."

Ah, friends, it was not Abraham Lincoln that slavery assassinated, but the mighty constituency of freedom which he represented—the NATION; you and your children in all coming generations. Depend upon it, the same deadly hate of liberty that took the life of the president, would, with the same cold-blooded villainy, take the life of every loyal citizen in the land; and nothing but our military superiority, and the crushing power of our veteran legions has thus far prevented this exterminating vengeance from reaching your doors, and from pouring out your blood upon your very hearth-stones and altars. We shall at length learn—God grant not too late—that the price of liberty is always and everywhere eternal vigilance, and that every compromise with its antagonisms of every form, especially with slavery, is sure to be followed by an avenging retribution of woe.

All along, under the conservative policy of Mr. Seward, and the guileless forgiving temper of the president, the administration has dealt forbearingly with the Rebellion; anticipating with an unseeming haste every favorable crisis to pronounce

terms of reconciliation, lenient in the extreme; seeking by kindness, if possible, to win its victims back to loyalty and peace. But, as you know, every overture has been met with defiant contempt and scorn. And this is their reward—*assassination.*

The Rebellion, instead of being subdued by this kindly ruling administrative clemency, becomes reckless and desperate, and culminates in a crime that has no parallel upon the pages of history.

Cæsar fell while enslaving the nations and while crushing out the liberties of Rome. Abraham Lincoln fell while undoing "heavy burdens," while "proclaiming liberty to the captives," and while saying to the oppressed "go free."

What will the civilization of the world say to this? When the bloody deed crosses the Atlantic, Europe will put on sables and go into mourning.

In cottage and palace, in workshop and counting-room, but especially in the dwellings of the poor, tears will be freely shed for his untimely end. From the frozen Russias to the sunny plains of Italy, from the Alps to the rugged hills of Wales and Scotland, will be heard one deep wail of sorrow, one lengthened sob of sympathy with us in our great woe. Mr. Lincoln was honored and loved by *the people* in Europe scarcely less than at home. He is the world's martyr of freedom, and history will canonize him as such. And history will also write that this darkest crime in the annals of the world, was committed in the capital of the United States; that the chief magistrate of the nation—the generous, forbearing, and noble Abraham Lincoln—was brutally murdered at the instigation and under the cognizance of the Confederacy, and at the very moment too, when, in the flush of victory, he was meditating only clemency and good will to his enemies.

His last inaugural! How sweet and gentle and Christian its spirit! What fairness and integrity, blended with what forgiving tenderness and love! It breathes the fragrance of

saintship, and seems as we now read it almost like a pensive prophecy of his impending doom. Had he known it was to be his farewell address to the American people, it could scarcely have been more befitting; so child-like, so simple, so pure in thought, so chaste in diction and spirit; the whitest marble will not be white enough for its tablet, nor the purest gold fine enough for its lettering! It will go out to the world and go down to history as a witness of the damning guilt of a treason that could seek the blood of so good, so just a man.

But, thanks to God, though the executive strength and glory of the nation has fallen, yet the nation lives and will live; and will live to visit speedily the extreme penalty of justice upon all the complicities and accessories of this crime. The nation will now arise and gird itself to fulfill the retributive ends of Providence.

Henceforth the passwords along our lines will be: "No more dalliance with slavery"; "no lenient leaning toward traitors"; "no easy paroles for assassins"; "but justice, stern, stern justice."

If the blood of righteous Abel "cried to heaven for vengeance," how much more the blood of honest Abraham Lincoln. And the cry of his blood will be heard and answered. A nemesis more certain than that which brooded over Egypt, and a destruction more terrible than that which overwhelmed Pharaoh and his hosts in the sea, will sweep this brutal slave power from the earth.

But the great lesson of this providence—for in its permission it is providential—is one of profound penitence and humiliation. It says to us, as a people, "Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that in due time he may exalt you, casting all your care upon him, for he careth for you."

Yes, my friends, God *has* cared for us; cares for us *now*, and will, I trust, care for us to the end.

Not more immediately or faithfully did he lead Israel in the wilderness than he has lead us in this terrible conflict.

All our reverses and failures, as well as victories and successes, have been timed and graduated to our moral discipline.

The mission of Israel was the unsparing extermination of the Canaanites, "root and branch," from the land. Not because God delighted in judgment, but because of their abominable wickedness.

They had "filled the land with their idolatry and pollutions" till it was ready to "vomit them out." "The cup of their iniquity was full." They were only fit to be destroyed. But when Israel began to be lenient and sparing, whether from interest or a false sympathy, then the divine judgments fell upon them. Saul for sparing Agag, a royal monster, whom God commanded to be destroyed, lost his throne.

I fear this nation has never yet humbled itself "under the mighty hand of God." We have been forced into this conflict at every step, and have been ready to draw back just as soon as the murderous clutch of slavery relaxed from our throat, and our life was felt to be released from absolute jeopardy. The war in its earlier stages had, I fear, little of moral principle. It was a simple struggle of the national authority against disintegration—that is all.

Even Mr. Lincoln said "he would save the Union with slavery, if he might; without slavery, if he must; but at all events, the Union."

Was this his sin for which he was only permitted to see the "Union saved without slavery," but forbidden to remain to enjoy it? But God soon gave us to understand that the Union could *not* be saved with slavery. He gave us no indications of final success till we made right and truth and justice supreme; and as we have fought "on this line" we have been successful, and as we have declined from it we have failed.

Every attempt to engross a premature peace, has been followed by some corresponding blight and judgment, and will

be to the end. "*We must finish the work we are in.*" We must destroy slavery or God will destroy us.

Is it said that we have sins at the North as well as at the South? Doubtless. But the great sin of the North has been and *is* its persistent and almost invincible complicity with slavery, clinging to us like idolatry; or the "sin of Jeroboam the son of Nebat wherewith he caused" the seceding tribes of "Israel to sin."

All along, the Rebellion has drawn its life, its ability to endure, its purpose and hope of final success from partisan sympathy in the North, rather than from the exhausted resources and waning vitality of the South.

And our great danger at this moment, as the military power of the South is broken under the tread of our victorious legions, is, that we shall have, under the parole policy, an invasion of assassins at our very shrines and hearthstones.

In vain do we cry, "Peace, peace, when there is no peace." More than once, or twice, or thrice, has this soft policy of allowing crime to go unwhipped of justice, well nigh ruined us. We have borne with treason in high places; shirked the "ministry of vengeance" in the "punishment of evil doers"; till villainy assumed, not without reason, that we "held the sword in vain," and that crime might be committed with impunity.

Indeed, for years past, in all judicial and governmental relations, we have practically ignored the divine authority and a retributive Providence. With an almost atheistical license we have set aside right and truth and equity, and have said, "How doth God know, and is there knowledge with the most High?" We have gloried in our liberty and free institutions, as if they were the purchase of our own valor and strength, while at the same time bartering them away under the rulings of a servile expediency and sordid avarice, presuming that we could keep our goodly heritage by partisan frauds and alliance with iniquity. But the voice of this providence is: "Verily, there is a God in the earth that judgeth

righteously." "By terrible things in righteousness, wilt thou answer us, O God of our salvation."

Let us, under this dark cloud, bow down with unfeigned humility before the Almighty. We are to-day a stricken nation; a bereaved people. God grant that we may be a truly humbled people. If this does not bring us into the dust and renew our faith God-ward, I know not what the end will be. But I trust it will. The very severity of the discipline indicates a gracious purpose, and we may hope soon to hear God say to us: "For a small moment have I forsaken thee, but with everlasting mercies will I gather thee." I believe God will bring us safely out of this conflict, and settle us upon our old foundations, and that this baptism of blood will consecrate us to that higher civilization of Christian principle and universal justice which Providence seems about inaugurating for the world.

Indeed, the death of Mr. Lincoln seems like an "expiation"—like a propitiatory "offering," to stay some brooding vengeance for our guilt—like a fulfillment of some necessity, "that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not."

Ah! how little did he think when he said, "If it be needful that for every drop of blood drawn by the lash, one should be returned by the sword," that his own blood would be required to fill up the full measure of restitution.

Nor, had he known it, would he with any less of religious reverence have said: "The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether?"

His last will and testament, of which his poor dumb wounds are the seal, was his proclamation of emancipation—the bequeathment of freedom to four millions of slaves. It was his dying trust to the nation; and the American people, without distinction of party, will gather around his bier, and by his scarcely staunched blood, swear they will see it executed. It has taken a long and painful discipline to

strengthen and nerve the national heart for this work. Again and again we have faltered and sought to be excused.

But the spell is broken. This bloody act comes with the authority of "a voice out of heaven," saying, "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto God, and God hath rewarded her iniquities. Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works. In the cup which she hath filled, fill to her double. How much she hath glorified herself and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her. For she saith in her heart, I sit a queen and shall see no sorrow. Therefore shall her plagues come in one day—*death, mourning, and famine*, and she shall be utterly consumed, for strong is the Lord God that judgeth her. Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets, for God hath avenged you on her. For in her was found the blood of prophets and saints and the souls of men."

How literally the word of the Lord has been fulfilled in the destruction of this antichrist of the South—the slave power in arms against God and humanity—the sudden downfall of the Rebellion will show.

Like Babylon of old, when the time of her judgment had come, in one short week this stupendous treason has perished.

Its proud and defiant armies have been routed and scattered; its haughty captains led as captives, and the arch-traitor himself, with his bloody hands clutching millions of gold wrenched by extortion from the rich, or wrung from the sufferings of the poor, is a fugitive and vagabond upon the earth.

Who will not, in the language of the Psalmist, pray, "So let thine enemies perish, O Lord."

Shall we then hold all the Southern people responsible for this crime? By no means. I doubt not there will be tears of as sincere sorrow shed at the South as at the North, and, if permitted, multitudes would mingle their tears with ours

around the remains of a president than whom none ever loved them more, or more earnestly sought their good. Against the innocent deluded people of the South we disavow all vindictive feeling and purpose. Our spirit toward them is that breathed in the prayer of the dying Saviour: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." But for treason and for slavery, out of which treason with all its kindred villainies has grown, we have no feeling but that of the most intense hatred, and no words but those of uncompromising and eternal execration.

But in the midst of our deep sorrow, it is sweet to know that this sudden call to martyrdom did not find Abraham Lincoln unprepared. While making no ostentatious profession of piety, it is well known that he was in the daily practice of its devotional duties—the reading the Scriptures and secret prayer, and that latterly his character had acquired additional strength and beauty from the refining charities and virtues of the Christian faith and experience. Like Abraham of old, he walked with God, and as he was the true friend of man, so I doubt not he was a true friend of God—a humble disciple of him who was "meek and lowly," and who gave his life for the world.

But it is difficult to feel that Mr. Lincoln is dead; that he is no longer among us and of us; that his benevolent, hopeful, and trusting soul will no longer smile upon us; that his voice of fatherly counsel will no longer guide us; that his eyes of thoughtful saddened humor, themselves a prophecy of his truthful life and tragic death, are closed forever. When we think of Washington, of the White House, of the cabinet, it seems that he must still be there presiding, watching, counseling, restraining, guiding all. It is almost impossible to avoid the illusion that his hand is still on the helm, guiding the Republic as she dashes on amid the billows of rebellion and civil strife.

Indeed, the intense excitement of yesterday and to-day; the deep darkness brooding over the land; the sorrow

stamped on every face; the mingled grief and consternation almost chiseled into every brow; and the wild throbbings of our hearts as the hard stony fact has everywhere faced us that the president has been assassinated—murdered under the very shadow of the capitol—all this seems like a fevered dream; like the frightful shadings of some disturbed vision of the night.

But it is no dream; no fiction; no drama; *it is history*—a history more terrible than dream, or fiction, or drama—the history of treason, conspiracy, and blood.

His body lies cold in its wounds at the capital, but his spirit mingles with the noble army of freedom's "confessors and martyrs," and with the sainted heroes of our country gone before to the "better land,"

May God sanctify the nation by this additional "trial of its faith." What the future has for us none can tell; verily, we know not what a day may bring forth.

But God reigns. He can make the wrath of man to praise, and the remainder of wrath he can restrain. He can bring light out of darkness; life out of death; and freedom even out of the bloody conspiracies of slavery.

God grant that the blood of Abraham Lincoln may cement the loyalty of the nation, North and South, in one strong league and brotherhood to maintain the national authority; to vindicate the national honor; to restore peace and to mete out to murderers, assassins, and traitors such punishment as the protection of life and the safety of the republic demand.

Let us, in this hour of national sorrow, abstain from all partisan animosities and ungenerous personal reflections.

And now in the words of our beloved president, "with charity for all, and with malice for none," putting away our tears and crushing back the swelling emotions of our hearts, let us go forth "to finish the work we are in."

"And may God think upon us for good," and "his good hand be upon us to give us an unexpected end" in restoring

to us speedily national unity and a righteous enduring peace. Amen.

THE OATH OF FREEDOM.

The beauty of our Israel,
The nation's strength! the nation's tower!
Twice chosen chief! loved, O how well!
Hath fallen 'neath the assassin's power.

Foul treason, writhing in its shame,
And slavery ravenous of blood,
Struck down, with murderous hate and aim,
Lincoln—the friend of man and God.

Now, by his flowing wounds we swear,
Since slavery hath broke the chain
That bound us long, we'll never wear
That bond of infamy again.

We swear the nation's holy soil,
Baptized to freedom in his blood,
Shall no more claim the bondman's toil,
And only be by freemen trod.

Help us, O God, this oath to keep;
We pledge it in thy sacred name;
And when in death we are called to sleep,
We'll swear our children to the same.

CONVENTION SERMON,

Preached before the Connecticut Baptist State Convention, at Waterbury, 1872, by Rev. A. G. Palmer, D. D.

Col. 1 : 27: "The riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints."

As we open the New Testament, especially the epistles, we are at once met with the fact that the writers held strong convictions of the dignity and value of the church of God. They always present the church as engaging the divine affections, the divine counsels, and the divine purposes from

eternity. They everywhere teach, as in the context, that before the "foundations of the world" were laid, or angels were created, the purpose of salvation was formed, and all the periods and conditions of its development and consummation were appointed.

Indeed, it is boldly assumed, that the creation in all its vastness, the universe with all its wealth of beauty and wisdom and power,—is subordinate to a higher and brighter revelation of God in the gospel. They say that God hath "created all things by Jesus Christ, and for his glory they are and were created," and that "of him and through him and to him are all things."

They assume that the glory of God is not to be seen in the mechanism of the universe, nor in the material light and beauty with which it is clothed; but in the higher moral mechanism of the gospel and in "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." And therefore the redemption of the church is always regarded as the crowning work of the divine manifestation, and as the culmination of the divine purposes.

Creation is subordinate to grace. The universe is the scaffolding of redemption; the lower plane, the material base where God begins to disclose the rudiments of that spiritual glory which will brighten on the vision of the holy as the eternal ages roll by.

Christ formed the worlds by the word of his power; but "the church he purchased with his blood." The heavens are the work of his hands; the fruit of infinite wisdom and might; but the church is the reward of his incarnation; of his holy nativity; of the manger; of his poverty and toil; of his bloody sweat; of his cross and dying agony and shame. Christ loved the church and gave himself for it, that he might cleanse it by the washing of the water of the word, and present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle; robed in divine purity, and clad in the loveliness and beauty of immortal youth.

Such are the current illustrations of the New Testament touching the work of redemption and the divine relations of the church of God. No wonder that Paul, under this magnified view, prayed so earnestly for the Ephesians that God would enlighten the eyes of their understanding, that they might know what was the hope of their calling, and what the greatness of his power toward those who believed, and what the riches of his glory in the inheritance of the saints!

In what, then, does the wealth of Christ's inheritance in the saints consist? What are some of those elements of being and character which make the church so valuable in the estimation of heaven, and constitute her pre-eminence over all the works of God, "the inheritance of Christ?"

This is the question which now claims our thought; and may the Holy Spirit so guide us into all truth, that we may say: "We all with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."

1. "The riches of Christ's inheritance in the saints" must have a primary regard to the radical and essential value of humanity, or to the worth of the human soul.

Worth of every kind, whether intrinsic or relative, is indicated by price or cost. The price paid is the estimated value —at least of the purchaser. A barren piece of land sometimes commands a fabulous price. The value may be in the soil, or in the location; but the value is real and positive.

Now God has declared his own estimate of the soul. He has determined its worth to himself by the price paid for its redemption. "Ye were redeemed not with corruptible things, as silver and gold." No, indeed! Gold could not redeem the soul. The universe could not represent its wealth. A thousand smoking altars and ten thousand bleeding victims could avail nothing toward its redemption. Over the church it is written, in letters of golden light, "Bought with a price, even the precious blood of Christ." "The church which he hath *purchased with his blood.*"

But we have in our darkness very low and unworthy views of the dignity and value of humanity; especially in its degradation and integrity, as it lies within us and around us, wrecked and broken by the fall, manacled and enslaved by passion, and imbruted by debasing appetites and lusts. As we look at humanity in its ruins, blighted and despoiled by sin; with its beauty marred, and its glory profaned in the dust, we are constrained to exclaim with the Psalmist: "What is man, that thou art mindful of him, or the Son of Man, that thou visitest him?" But when we turn to the cross and study its mysteries, and see therein the love of God for the fallen race, humanity begins to be "transfigured," "the fashion of its countenance changes," and its sordid vestments become white and glistening.

It is true that under the simple light of nature men have dreamed of a higher human destiny, and of another and a purer life. Socrates speculated, and Plato reasoned strongly upon the abstraction of an ideal immortality. But it was reserved for the gospel, by its amazing redemption, and by its infinite sacrifice, to "bring life and immortality to light" by the "resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead."

And it is intensely this "purchased" immortality; this gracious relation of the church to the "life everlasting," to heaven, and the ever unfolding glories of "God in Christ," that makes the church the riches of God's inheritance.

Liberty has been made doubly dear to us by the price we have been compelled to pay for it. National existence and unity have literally been purchased by blood. But we feel that they are worth the cost. And the church, in God's estimation, is worth the "purchase,"—the "redemption." The natural heart cannot see this. Christ crucified is "to the Jew a stumbling block, and to the Greek foolishness." The world sees nothing of special worth in the church; "no form nor comeliness that should be desired."

And in truth there is in the church nothing attractive to

the eye of sense. Her exterior, like that of the tabernacle, is often forbidding and repulsive, and has little affinity with what the world regards desirable and valuable. Indeed, upon a worldly basis, the "inheritance of the saints" is often the most undesirable. There have been times when the world would not take the church as a gift; times when in her stern and unrelenting fidelity, like her Lord, she has been "despised and rejected of men." And in her best estate and most favored relations, there will always be found enough in the inworking and outworking of a true Christianity to make it offensive to the carnal heart, and to excite the bitter hostility and proscription of the world.

But beneath this outward covering of "rams' skins and badgers' skins"; beneath her coarse and unsightly exterior; beneath what the world regards as a needless austerity of faith and discipline, of humility and self-denial, there are concealed the elements of a divine worth; a glory of character, and principle, and destiny, which makes her in the sight of God "Elect and precious."

It is of the *church* that God says, "This is my rest forever: here will I dwell, for I have desired it." It is of the saints, even in their deep poverty, and seclusion, and social exile, that God says: "They shall be mine, when I make up my jewels." It is of the church that it is written: "Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined." "The Lord's portion is his people, and Jacob is the lot of his inheritance."

John says he saw "a great multitude which no man could number," standing upon the sea of glass before the throne, and "they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to receive blessing, and honor, and dominion, and might, for thou hast washed us in thy blood, and hast made us kings and priests unto God." And on through eternity the wealth of Christ's inheritance in the saints will continue to increase, as they receive more and more of his fullness, and reflect more and more of his glory.

2. But the worth of the church is not only personal and intrinsic; it is also relative and reflective.

In the redemption of the church, God has laid open the deeper and deepest elements of his character and government. It is hence the apostle so often speaks of the gospel as "a mystery hid from other ages, but now made manifest through the church," not only in this world, but in the distant periods of eternity, for the study of the universe forever. "That in the ages to come, he might show the exceeding riches of his grace, wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence." "To the intent that now unto principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known through the church the manifold wisdom of God."

What a conception! The church a monumental record of God's grace and love, rising up into the depths of eternity. The church a temple whose pinnacles shall cluster around the throne of God forever. The church a city of burnished gold, walled around with precious stones, and in which "they need not the light of the sun; for the Lord God is the light and temple thereof." In all these rich and gorgeous emblems God would shadow forth his estimation of the church, and make known his purpose of love toward her.

Over every page of her history will be written: "To the praise of the glory of his grace." In redemption, his justice, his holiness, his truth, his love, his mercy, his goodness, his grace, and his power will all be so seen as to constrain the confession: "Holy and just and true are thy ways, Lord God almighty." Redemption will be the "new song" of the everlasting ages.

3. Let us pass to contemplate the worth of the church for the present world.

"As my Father hath sent me into the world, so have I sent you into the world." "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit." "Ye are the light of the world; ye are the salt of the earth." "Let your light so shine

before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven." "I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil."

The church is not only the embodiment of the passive graces and virtues, but of holy activities and aggressive forces. She is not only "clear as the sun and fair as the moon, but terrible as an army with banners." She has a warfare to wage; a battle to fight; a victory to gain; a kingdom and throne to establish in the earth.

Christ came to destroy the works of the devil, and to restore this world to its rightful Sovereign. And it is his purpose to accomplish this through the church. "God hath chosen the weak things of this world to confound the mighty." "Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings thou hast ordained strength, that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger." "The kingdom and the greatness of the kingdom shall be given to the saints of the Most High, and they shall possess it forever."

"All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." "Go ye therefore into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." And from that time to this there has been no cessation of hostilities.

Truth and falsehood, sin and holiness, faith and unbelief, the church and the world, have maintained a ceaseless warfare. But amid darkness and persecutions and apostasies, like the ark amid the surgings of the deluge, the church has lived and will continue to live, until her warfare is accomplished, the final victory gained, and "the kingdoms of this world shall have become the kingdom of our Lord and his Christ."

The church in her feebleness must fight the battles of the Lord. "We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, spiritual wickedness in high places." The angels are not permitted to mingle in this sublime conflict. They can only encamp around the saints as

spectators of the glorious struggle. Just as distant nations and peoples watched the American crisis with the most profound interest, because on its issue hung the hopes of freedom for the world, so the angels watch the conflicts of the church, because thereon hangs the great issue of the divine sovereignty; the supremacy of right over wrong, of truth and justice over error and sin.

And so the very feebleness of the church reflects the divine glory. "We have this treasure in earthen vessels." Even our impotence and dependence are elements of value, inasmuch as they constrain the enemies of God to say, "The Lord hath done great things for them." "Great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of her."

Yes, indeed. The very groans and struggles and prayers of the church; her strong cryings and supplications; her faith in opposition to discouragements; her courage in opposition to threatening dangers; her "hoping against hope"; her invincible perseverance; her tireless zeal; her abundant labors; her love waxing stronger and stronger amid persecutions, imprisonments, and deaths; these constitute a moral and spiritual capital that makes her "the riches of Christ's inheritance."

Amid the flashing glory of the heavenly world, there is nothing which Christ regards with so much interest as his struggling church battling with the elements of sin; contending for the right and true; "not counting her life dear to herself," and "rejoicing that she is counted worthy to suffer shame for his name's sake." There is a value in her poor sacrifices above the most costly offerings of the world; a music in her prayers, and an eloquence in her tears and confessions, and an intensity in her love, to which the worship of angels forms no parallel.

And it is this militant, missionary, aggressive element that constitutes her practical value. It is the constraining power of the love of Christ; his grace, his Spirit incarnated in her "according to the inworking of his mighty power," rising

up for the conquest of the world, to make all nations obedient to the faith, that constitutes her great practical value for the salvation of the world. "I am ready," says Paul, "not only to suffer but to die for his name's sake." Verily; the true church, led by a true ministry, has always been a militant church, consecrated by the baptism of blood and suffering to the work of salvation.

In this service the labors and prayers of all are equally appreciated and honored. The small as well as the great; the poor as well as the rich; the ignorant as well as the learned; the feeble as well as the strong; all may labor "according as God has given to each the gift of faith"; for "it is God that worketh in us to will and to do of his good pleasure."

And we are assured that our labor shall not be "in vain in the Lord." Christ's inheritance in the saints takes in all classes, all conditions, all ages, all faith, all prayer, and all labor done for the name's sake of Jesus. The prayer of sighs, of broken utterances, of lisping childhood, and the confession of Christ from stammering lips, are of equal value with the most labored confessions of faith: the widow's mite with the costly benefactions of the rich.

And therefore the history of the church has come down to us through tears and afflictions and crosses and deaths. If you look for the true church, you will find her in the wilderness; hid in mountain gorges; a poor and proscribed people afflicted and tormented; patiently enduring suffering; yet bravely and persistently vindicating the truth of God and the rights of conscience and worship.

The church was with the Puritans in the Mayflower, exiled under the scourge of religious despotism. The church was with Roger Williams, when for the rights of conscience and freedom of soul-worship he fled to a sanctuary in the bosom of the savage tribes around the headwaters of Narragansett Bay. The church was with the Methodists under Whitefield and Wesley, when in the face of the world's bitter

scorn and scandal, they went forth with a burning love and consuming zeal to point the perishing multitudes to the Lamb. The church was with the Baptists of New England one hundred years ago, when they fought the battle of religious liberty, and sundered the unholy alliance between Church and State. The church is with the Baptists of Germany at the present day, and with our little churches scattered throughout Prussia, Russia, Denmark, Sweden, France, Spain, and Italy, and with our rising churches of India, and throughout the world where the primitive power of the gospel lives in its divine simplicity.

It is here that the real value of the church is found. Her worth is graduated not by worldly resources; not by social standing; not by intellectual elevation; not by educational refinement and culture, but by the strength of her faith; by the depth of her humility; by the intensity of her zeal; and by the consuming fervor of her devotion to Jesus Christ.

And as these elements are possessed and nurtured and made fruitful, so will the church in any place increase in practical wealth and value. "Come up hither," said the angel to John, "and I will show thee the Bride, the Lamb's wife." "And I saw the New Jerusalem coming down from God out of heaven, adorned as a bride for her husband." "Such honor have all his saints."

Christ values his church more than she values herself, and it is his purpose to adorn her and beautify her and glorify her, and present her to himself "spotless and without blame before him in love."

1. Let this subject then remind us of the special grace bestowed on us in redemption. How strange that Christ should seek an inheritance in this fallen world, or that passing by the bright ranks of pure and blessed spirits, he should find this dark world, and redeeming from thence a church by his death and blood, should take her back to heaven as the "riches of his inheritance." "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us." "Herein

is love; not that we loved God, but that God loved us, and gave his Son to die for us." This verily is the mystery of the gospel, that "when we were without strength, in due time Christ died for us."

This is the distinguishing grace of the gospel, and herein is found its adaptation to a fallen race. If such a race be saved, the penalty of the law must be arrested; they must be pardoned, justified, renovated, sanctified and made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints.

And this is what the gospel does. It brings salvation, not to the righteous, the moral, the educated, the refined alone; but to the outcasts, and the victims of sin and crime and shame; it arrested Saul, washed out his guilt, and sent him forth as an apostle of mercy and grace to a perishing world; and from that time till his death Paul ceased not to proclaim: "It is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." It took John Newton, a vicious sailor, and made him a faithful minister of the grace of God, and gave him such a sweet experience of the preciousness of Christ, that he went through the world testifying and singing:

> "Dear dying Lamb, thy precious blood
> Shall never lose its power."

It took John Bunyan, a coarse, vulgar boy, and made him such a saint and pilgrim, that the record of his experience will to the end of time brighten the pathway of all succeeding pilgrims to glory.

Christ took from his cross a criminal to paradise, and gathered his first church at Jerusalem from among his murderers, and enriched his "inheritance in the saints" from the corrupt cities of Rome and Corinth and Ephesus and Antioch and Samaria.

At the bottom of a dark catalogue of degrading vices, Paul says: "And such were some of you; but ye are washed; ye are sanctified; ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus." And in this way Christ is now enriching his inheritance.

Every year, every month, every week, every day, and every hour, he swells its wealth by the redemption of souls from the haunts of sin, from the hovels of wretchedness and want, from the darkness of ignorance and superstition, and from the children of bondage and toil.

2. And let this subject indicate to us the spirit of a true Christianity, and the work it will assume to do. Its spirit is that of a yearning, loving sympathy for the sinful and perishing. It has "bowels of mercies." It weeps with Christ over Jerusalem; with Paul it beseeches men to be reconciled to God. It is not a piety of the synagogue and the church alone; much less of the polished circles of Christian refinement only. It is a piety of the streets and highways and hedges; mingling with the children of want, to clothe the naked, to feed the hungry, to heal the sick, to cleanse the filthy, to penetrate and cheer the foul atmosphere of sin with the sweet light of God's reconciling favor and love.

It is this peculiar development of the gospel that the present crisis demands. The day is passing when the church can maintain her standing by splendid architecture and imposing forms of worship. The stirring activity of the various forms of unbelief pressing into their service the humanities of the gospel, is forcing Christianity from her cushioned indolence in the sanctuary into the street, and from the dull round of ecclesiastical service and the ritualism of denominational worship into the actual struggle of the Christian conflict. As things are, and are more and more to be, there is nothing for the church but to work or die. No compromise will avail. And I thank God that it is so.

We must return to the simple faith of the gospel, and give ourselves to its primitive work of saving men, or God will take from us the vineyard and give it to others who will render the fruit thereof in its season. An Episcopalian clergyman once said to me: "The notes of a true church are that God is in the midst of her, and that souls through her faith and prayers and labors are brought to Christ." Yes,

verily, faith, work, and salvation are the notes of the true church.

Some of you will remember that Dr. Warren said at a meeting of this body some years ago, that "the Baptist church was born in the kitchen and cradled in the schoolhouse," and that we must return to the kitchen and schoolhouse, or we should soon have no Baptist church.

And has it come to this, that the Baptist church in its purer and better type and spirit, is a thing of history, rather than of actual life and power? We retain the organism, the polity, the discipline, the baptism, the service, and the ritual of worship, but where is the cloud of the divine presence? "Where is the Lord God of Elijah?" Where is that mysterious power *we* once held over the masses? Where is that unction that made our ministry, all uncultured and untaught of the schools, yet "mighty through God to the pulling down of the strongholds of Satan?" Will it descend upon our ministry and membership no more?

Not a little is said at the present time about the decay of the pulpit, and its loss of popular power. But in my opinion, if the pulpit is decaying, it is because of its meretricious adornments, its simpering emulation of refinement, and literature, and worldly wisdom, and "excellency of speech," and especially its dallying with "science falsely so called."

The pulpit may lose its influence; perhaps has done so; but the gospel will forever remain "the power of God unto salvation." That will never decay; that will never grow old; that will never become obsolete. What is wanted in the pulpit is the gospel in its naked simplicity; in its unadorned purity; not only in its theological value, but in the spirit of its ministration; downright earnestness, that shall constrain the conviction that the gospel is a true message from God. I enter no plea for an affected coarseness, much less for an affected or real ignorance; as though knowledge were criminal, and vulgarity a virtue. But of the two evils, I certainly prefer an honest bluntness, and even a sincere

coarseness and a home-thrusting pungency, to that excessive refinement that goes into hysterics over a breach of grammar or pronunciation, but which can tolerate any amount of heresy if but well written and elegantly spoken.

Shut up the gospel in splendid cathedrals, where wealth and fashion come at best for an intellectual entertainment, and to while away the hours of the Sabbath, and however ably and honestly dispensed, the gospel is the feeblest of all moral forces, and one for which the devil cares the least. But commit it to plain, earnest men, whose hearts glow with its love and are burdened with its messages to a lost world, and send its invitations into the highways and hedges, and "compel men," by the violence of a holy earnestness "to come in," and there will be no longer occasion to apologize for the pulpit's want of power.

What is needed to give the gospel its primitive success is "the power of God" upon the ministry and the entire church. Anything less than this is "the weakness of men," and will prove in the end a miserable failure. The importunities of the church should ever turn to this point, that God would clothe his word with power.

"Brethren," said Paul, "pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course and be glorified"; "that utterance may be given,"—"that I may open my lips boldly, and speak as I ought to speak." O, power, *power* is what is needed in the pulpit and in all the sources of religious influence. Whatever else we do not have, this we must have, and if we can only have it by returning to the humble shrines of our denominational nativity, then as Dr. Warren said, "to the schoolhouse and kitchen let us return."

It were better to worship in log cabins, and even in the dens and caves of the earth, and have the presence of the Master and the comforts of the Holy Ghost, than in the most splendid temples with a form of godliness but without the power. We can do without architecture and eloquence and music, and all the modern apparatus of worship, but we can-

not do without the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit. We can afford to part with everything but the "simplicity of Christ."

Never was the exhortation of Paul more befitting, "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the rudiments of this world, and not after Christ." "Therefore, take to yourselves the whole armor of God, and having done all—stand."

When some one asked Wellington what his plan of battle was, he replied, "No plan but to stand and fight." And so, drawing up his battalions in solid columns, they stood like a wall of living granite, against which the massed forces of Napoleon were hurled, only to be broken and destroyed. And this is God's message to us: "Having done all, stand." Maintain an unbroken front. "Hold fast the profession of your faith without wavering," to the end.

In the battle of the Alma, the two armies, the allied forces on the north and the Russians strongly fortified on the south, lay facing each other for hours. At length the rank and file of the British soldiery became so impatient of this inaction, that they demanded to be allowed to charge upon the Russian guns. As soon as Lord Raglan whispered the word "Advance," it ran through the lines like electricity, and they plunged into the Alma and surged up the opposite ranks into the very face of fire and death. They saw that the stand-still policy was defeat and ruin. It is so everywhere; and nowhere more so than in religious interests and denominational responsibilities.

"Speak unto the children of Israel that they go forward." Sometimes seamen find themselves swept far out of their course by the deceitful drift of unknown currents, and ere they are aware they are stranded upon some fatal reef or rocky coast. And is not this deceitful drift the danger of evangelical Christendom at the present time? We talk of the encroachments of Rome, and magnify the dangers of the papacy; but our real danger is in this fatal drift toward the

gulf of theological infidelity and ecclesiastical apostasy. When the exhortation to "contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints" is proscribed as obsolete, and the faith itself is cancelled, and in the ecclesiastical relations especially is *ruled* out as a *non-essential quantity*, Rome will verily have an easy conquest. Against such superficial convictions and effeminate types of piety as now prevail, there will be little need of the old severities of fagot and flame, and rack and torture, when some skillful change on the political chess-board by Jesuitical cunning may secure the same end without a struggle. But in that conflict, the shadows of which begin to darken around us, if as a denomination we would not be swept down, we must take timely warning, and tightening every inch of cordage and canvas, and lashing down every spar and hatchway, put our craft into *the very teeth of the storm*.

Nothing will avail for that final struggle with Rome, but "the faith once delivered to the saints." A Jesuit made his boast to one whom he thought a brother Jesuit, that they could easily manage all the sects but the Scotch Presbyterians and the Baptists. He said these were "such invincible heretics, they would have to burn them." Invincible heretics, verily! So may they be to the end! Old John Knox, by the power of faith and prayer, wrenched Scotland from the grasp of the papacy; and the Baptists, from the days of the apostles till now, as Milton says, "are the only sect that has never symbolized with Rome." Is it not pitiful that at this late day any among us should be ambitious to take a departure in that direction? We do not envy them either the beginning or the ending of their journey. "They went out from us because they were not of us."

May God grant, that as Stillman and Baldwin in the great Unitarian apostasy "held fast the profession of their faith without wavering," and maintained the gospel in its severe purity and simplicity, and "kept the faith," the leaven of evangelical doctrine, for the regeneration of New England,

so the Baptist pulpit in these times of peril for the truth, may be faithful to the precedents and rulings of its earlier ministrations, and to the end stand fast in the faith, "Rooted and grounded and settled therein, and not easily moved away from the hope of the gospel."

THE ORGANIC UNITY OF THE CHURCH.

A discourse delivered before the Board of the Connecticut Baptist Convention, at Middletown, Jan. 19, 1875, by Rev. A. G. Palmer, D. D. Printed by request in the "Watchman and Reflector."

John 17 : 21.—"That they may all be one."

From the text and collateral passages, it is manifest that the unity of the church was an object of earnest desire with the Saviour. He knew its value and labored to secure its early development among his disciples. One fold for the many sheep; one body for the many members; one vine for the many branches; these were the emblems he delighted to use to indicate the organic unity of his church, the vital oneness between himself and people. "I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one"—this was the burden of his unceasing intercession. And it would seem that the earnest desire of Christ for this unity as the central life force of his church, could not fail to commend it to the faith of his people, and to awaken in all their hearts kindred sympathies and importunities. And has it not done this? What are the yearnings and strugglings of the Christian heart for the communion of saints and the unity of the church, but the working of Christ's power, the incarnation of his Spirit, the breathing out and offering up from the hearts and lips of his people evermore this catholic prayer of the Christian ages, "That they all may be one."

[The preacher enlarges in his introduction on "the unity of the church as a radical idea of Christianity," insists that here "there is no chance for an accommodating eclecticism," and having glanced at the great multiplication of sects, he comes to the inquiry:]

But how can a state of things so rife with schism and misrule harmonize with the prayer of our Lord, "That they all may be one?"

I will reply, first it will be observed that the prayer of Christ had an immediate reference to his disciples as the then existing church, and there can be no difficulty in finding it answered in them. They could affirm, there is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one body, "even as ye are called in one hope of your calling." Whether at Jerusalem, or Corinth, or Ephesus, or Rome; whether in Palestine, Greece, Italy, Gaul, or Britain, the Christian church was one body, her polity one, her ministry and ordinances the same. The apostolic church had the two prime elements of unity and catholicity. But if this prayer must be regarded as embracing all generations of his people, still you will observe it must be interpreted of the church of the future, and not of the ungathered and unfolded herds of Christendom. "Other sheep," he says, "I have, which are not of this fold; them also must I bring, that there may be one fold and one shepherd. I pray not for the world, but for those whom thou hast given me out of the world. Neither pray I for these alone, but for those who shall believe on me through their word." Thus carrying forward the organic unity of the church to the end of the world.

Now as there is in the gospel an exclusive truth that can never mix or affiliate with error, a truth that must, like God himself, stand alone in its own absolute sovereignty, so there must be a true ecclesiasticism that can never become obsolete; perfect in itself, infallible, unchanging; a *divine polity*, that by its very simplicity shall make its discipline, and sacraments, and ministry always and everywhere authoritative,

and so anticipate all possibilities of progress in intellectual and social culture as to render *schism* and *sect* forever without an apology.

The church, not less than theology, must be one thing and not many things; must have one organic structure, not various and discordant types, as education or prejudice may decide. It is a favorite claim with our modern liberals and broad-church theorists that the Christians of any given place are the church of that place, and that too, without any regard to ministry, teaching, discipline, ordinances, or even worship, save as each one may enjoy the widest latitude of faith and practice. This may be an extreme outgrowth of pure Congregationalism; but may it not be worthy of inquiry, if it be not natural and legitimate, the moral fruit of a naked independency? A religious system is not to be judged so much by its earlier workings, modified as they must be by the educational forces of older, not to say more orthodox standards from which it has descended, as by its later results, and by its possibilities of decadence and apostasy. The departure of error from truth may at first be almost imperceptible, but soon becomes a wide and impassable heresy. You cannot precipitate the sects, with all their sharp antagonisms, upon one basis, so that together they shall constitute the church of Christ in its organic, visible unity.

Manifestly, either no one of the sects has the true ecclesiastical polity, or one has it to the exclusion of the others. How then is this question to be decided? Rome clothes herself with authority, and makes her teaching decisive and final. She says, Come to me; I hold the keys of the kingdom; supreme authority has been entrusted to my hands, transmitted through an unbroken succession of bishops, from the primacy of Peter to the present venerable pontiff, and will continue my inalienable inheritance to the end of the world. And every sect in spirit does the same thing, so closely is the idea of authority bound up with the conception of a true ecclesiasticism. The very assumption that any

given sect has the truth constitutes a claim to infallibility, puts it in an attitude of authority; for truth has not only the right to rule, but is bound to assert and enforce that right. The gospel claims the obedience of all nations; so Rome, ignoring all the sects, appoints her bishops for all the people; and the Episcopal church, in a similar spirit of prelatical supremacy, does the same thing. The rector of a small church, numbering a dozen communicants, claims a whole township made up of Congregationalists, Methodists, and Baptists, as his parish; erring sheep, to be sure, but to be gathered as speedily as possible into the true fold.

But where, then, shall we seek and find the church? Among the rottenness and corruption of Rome? No! At the hands of the English bishops, who attempted to remodel the church upon the historical data of the second and third centuries? No! Shall we look for it in the rushing torrents of the German Reformation? No! Shall we find it in the multitude of conflicting sects, each compassing sea and land to make one proselyte? No! Where, then, shall we look for this perfect organic development, this model church, with polity, sacraments, and teaching so authoritative as to command our unhesitating faith and obedience? I answer, in the primitive church itself, founded by Christ, and under the ministry of inspired apostles guided into all truth. That church, in polity, doctrine, and ordinances, *was* infallible, and will so remain forever, and the record of its order, teaching, and example is to be found not in the second and third centuries, but in the first; not in the traditions of the fathers, but in the Acts of the Apostles, and in the apostolic Epistles to the churches. The true church of Jesus Christ still lives in the New Testament, a distinct and beautiful model. There all its doctrines, ordinances, discipline, and modes of worship are plainly exhibited, a perfect draught, photographed by the unerring light of the Holy Spirit, and as easily transferred into the nineteenth century as the sacred architecture of the middle ages reappears in our own places of worship. We

can freely concede all that is claimed for the authority of the apostolic church; more, all that is claimed for the primacy of Peter. Be it allowed that Christ gave him "the keys," and assured him that his rulings on earth should be ratified in heaven. I doubt not they were thus ratified, and will so remain forever. In the New Testament, the living word of God from the lips of inspired apostles, with its infallible tests of character, is still "opening" and "shutting" the kingdom of heaven to men In this way the whole college of the apostles, with Peter at their head, still stand up, saying, "Be it known unto you, men and brethren, that through this man's blood is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins."

THE QUESTION OF SCHISM.

We now come to the place where we can determine the question of heresy and schism. Heresy is a rejection or a corruption of the doctrines of the gospel; schism is a separation from the church of the New Testament; sect is a usurpation of ecclesiastical power and authority. These antagonisms to the true Christian doctrine and polity began to manifest themselves very early. Even in the time of the apostles there were those who separated themselves and wrested the Scriptures to their own destruction. Paul saw the rise of this anti-Christian element, and sought to guard the churches against its seductive workings and usurpations. He predicted its progress and culmination in a bloody persecution that should "weary and wear out the saints," and compel the church to "flee into the wilderness, to be nourished for a season till the mystery of God should be finished."

"After my departure," said he, "grievous wolves shall enter, not sparing the flock; yea, of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after them." The fulfillment of these words was not long delayed. The earliest ecclesiastical authorities show that from the close of the apostolic age there was a rapid departure from the simplicity of the gospel. Rites, forms, and

ceremonies wholly unknown to the letter and spirit of the New Testament, were multiplied till the beautiful original of Christianity was lost in the prevailing apostasy. Yet there was, as ever, "a remnant left according to the election of grace," that "contended earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints," adhered to the simplicity of the gospel, and kept the ordinances as delivered unto them. They fled from the scourge of persecution, and, concealed in the defiles and fastnesses of the mountains, maintained the purity of the Christian doctrine, the authority of a true Christian polity, and the simplicity of a true Christian worship. When Luther opened the Scriptures, he not only learned the precious doctrine of justification by faith, but found the pages of the New Testament everywhere radiant with the light of the primitive churches—a contrast of purity and beauty to the bloated arrogance and offensive corruption of Rome. Nevertheless, with all his courage, he hesitated to leap the chasm, and satisfied himself with an attempt to reform some of the grosser abuses of the "man of sin."

So the English bishops, instead of going at once to the word of God as the only authority in Christian doctrine and polity, groped their way amid the dust and darkness of the second and third centuries, and sought to reconstruct the church upon a confessedly uninspired basis.

In justification of this, it is claimed that the history of the second and third centuries is to be taken as an authoritative interpretation of the first; and that the early fathers, the immediate successors of the apostles, are to be accredited as their unerring expounders, just as the earlier administrations of our government are regarded as the best exposition of the Federal Constitution. But this argument loses its plausibility when we remember that in the New Testament we have not simply a bill of ecclesiastical rights and constitutional abstractions, but the *acts* of a living church under the rulings and trainings of apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone."

A clergyman once said to me, that "the great evil of schism," meaning, of course, separation from the Episcopacy, was "that dissent had no fixed character; it might be near the truth to-day, and widely false to-morrrow. Puritanism," he said, "like the rock on which it landed, had been hewed and scathed and chipped, until little of its primitive type was left." This may be so. It is not our place to vindicate the Puritans; history will do them justice. We do not know that they claimed perfection of organization or doctrine. They held an open Bible, and said they were "waiting for more light"; a confession which, if indicative of an unsettled faith, was certainly modest and amiable. It is to be regretted, however, that when the "more light" came up, the Baptist movement of 1741, '42, and '43, they not only closed the "open Bible" and refused the "new light," but with an intolerance more proscriptive than that from which they fled, persecuted it even to banishment and exile.

The charge, however, may be true. New England Congregationalism may have lost its identity—its sturdy, evangelical life; and in its struggles with the intellectual growths and scientific changes of the centuries, it may run down into the frigid, lifeless dicta of a flexible and liberal theology, as there are but too many indications that it must. But what then? We have the word of God left, and therein historically "drafted," with laws, doctrines, ministry, and ordinances complete, *the church left.*

In this question of church building we prefer a higher antiquity than the Puritans, or Roger Williams, or the second century. In the place of "the Fathers," we take for our masters the apostles themselves, and from the dim and uncertain light of uninspired history, we turn to the clear, full light of God.

We say that is the true church that is conformed to apostolic model, and that this church ought to be ecumenical, and command the faith and fellowship of all Christians.

Can such a church be found? Many think not. And if not, then the church has no corporate existence, and the promise of Christ that "the gates of hell should not prevail" has failed. This cannot be. We are to believe and affirm that as amid all corruption of doctrine Christ has always preserved the testimony of a pure faith, so amid all organic defections and decays he has maintained the corporate identity and unity of his church.

PRIMITIVE ECCLESIASTICISM.

But if this primitive ecclesiasticism survives, where is it to be found? We reply, Where the divine polity of the "Great Commission" has been acknowledged and obeyed: "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature; he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." "Go teach all nations, baptizing them." This was specifically the organic law of the church. The order was, preaching, believing, baptizing, communing; the gospel, faith, baptism, fellowship; the ministry, the disciples, the water, the church; or, Christ, confession, and the kingdom; and all church building, not according to this regnant succession, is schismatical and sectarian. But wherever you find the ministry of the word, faith, baptism, and the Supper, there you have, by a vital reproduction, the holy, apostolic, catholic church. Revelation, belief, confession; teaching, faith, baptism; this was the trine foundation of the primitive church.

It need scarcely be said that the "*Acts of the Apostles*," in the planting and training of the first churches, illustrate fully and confirm this argument. On the day of Pentecost, under Peter's sermon, "they that gladly received the word were baptized; and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls." And wherever the gospel went, whether in Samaria, Antioch, Damascus, on the highway to Gaza, or at Philippi, this order was invariably regarded. As soon as disciples were made in any place,

they were "baptized, both men and women," and so the congregation of the Lord, or the local church, was established. And under this law, churches in a few years were gathered in Palestine, and in all the principal cities of Greece, and then soon in Europe and all the known world. "So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed."

A church of baptized believers is invincible. Such a church may be in the conflict; indeed, must be; but cannot be seduced or vanquished. The one Lord, the one faith, the one baptism, are incorruptible and indestructible. "Know ye not that as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we also should walk in newness of life."

I remember hearing Dr. Poor some years ago say that "in forming churches among the heathen, they had to form them of baptized believers only." "It was," he said, "the logic of circumstances, the same as controlled the formation of the first churches by the apostles." And I thought, "Verily," and felt like saying as the English do, "*Hear! hear!*"

It was intensely this logic of circumstances that Jonathan Edwards felt when he struck down the "half-way covenant," and labored to purge his church from the immoralities and impieties with which he found it overrun. Strange that a mind so logical as his did not see that the source of this degeneracy lay back of the half-way covenant, in "infant baptism," and that if the communion within the church should be guarded by a personal faith and a "truly regenerate state," much more baptism, as the door into the church, should be so guarded. What a perversion, to give baptism —the confession of the faith—to infancy, when faith is an impossibility.

All honor to Jonathan Edwards! He did a greater, nobler, and better work than he intended. His zeal for the purity of the Lord's table, and his "ictic theology," as it

has been stigmatized, meaning, I suppose, the theology of sudden and marvelous conversion, as illustrated in the "great revival,"—all this found a response in the strong common sense of the New England mind, and "was the occasion," as Backus says, "of the rapid spread of Baptist principles and sentiments about this time." "The subjects of that work," he continues, "embraced two ideas," a great gain for that day in the realm of ecclesiastical thought. The first was, that saving faith is necessary to give any soul a true right to communion in the church of God. Secondly, that there is no warrant for a half-way covenant therein, and, as infants are generally in a state of nature when they are said to be brought into covenant, infant baptism expires before these principles.

BAPTIST CHURCHES.

Is it not marvelous that synchronizing with this movement and with the advent of convictions and reasonings of this kind, Baptist churches should have suddenly sprung up all over the land, and that the "sect everywhere spoken against" began to command the popular regard, and to take on strength for aggression and conquest. Perhaps if Edwards could have foreseen the remote results of those sturdy blows he was striking against the foundations of New England Congregationalism, he might have paused in his work. But the blow once struck, the word once spoken, the logic once out could not be recalled. "The people heard the word, and great was the company that published it." The common people received it gladly, and, like the disciples of old, went everywhere as self-appointed missionaries of this new evangel of ecclesiastical light and liberty, "God working with them by signs and wonders," and "much people were added to the Lord."

And how now, after a century and a half, do the books stand, as written up to this date of 1875? On the one side we have Edwards driven from his parish and exiled to a small missionary station among the Indians, as Williams had

been before him; and on the other side we have in these United States a church of baptized believers with a membership of some seventeen hundred thousand, and an annual gain by baptism, for the year just closed, of thousands to their numbers. The faithful laborers, who had toiled so long amidst so many difficulties, and waited so patiently, as they look down upon the fruit of their labors, must be profoundly satisfied therewith, and unite in saying, "Not unto us; not unto us, O Lord, but unto thy name be the praise and the glory forever."

PRIMITIVE TRUTH.

The heathen said of Israel, after a signal deliverance, "The Lord hath done great things for them"; and Israel replied, "The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad." And we may to-day, in view of what God hath wrought for us, and through us, and by us, for his name's sake and glory, say, "Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost." And we may also add, "As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen." Which, being interpreted, means, I suppose, in New Testament language, "Let us hold fast the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end, and the profession of our faith without wavering." "I write unto you no new commandment,"—*no new departure*—"but the old commandment which ye have heard from the beginning." "Go ye into all the world and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, and lo, I am with you alway, even to the end of the world."

Thus far I have considered the question of an outward organic union only, and I have dwelt the longer on this because it is a very common claim that the Scriptures do not affirm this view at all; that organization and polity are not matters of authority, but of circumstances and convenience; that the ordinances, baptism especially, are to be catalogued

on the wide margin of "non-essentials." This is the popular or "broad church" view.

A Congregational minister said to a lady—a Baptist whom he was anxious to take into his communion, "O, if the form is of any consequence, of course immersion is the primitive mode." Of course it is. So Dr. Judson discovered, and acknowledged as soon as he discovered it. So Baptist W. Noel, after an honest, prayerful investigation, discovered and acknowledged as soon as he reached the conviction that believers are the only scriptural subjects of baptism, and that the only baptism known in the New Testament is immersion. And with these agree the ripest scholarship of the age. I believe that the Scriptures definitely affirm one, and only one, church polity, and that they strongly enforce the visible unity of the church of God. "There is one body, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism."

If the Christian faith and hope be one, so with equal authority the church is one. If I regarded the church to which I belong as "a sect," and not as the true apostolic church of Christ, divinely constituted, divinely endowed, and divinely empowered, in faith, doctrine, ordinances, ministry, and government conformed to the primitive model, I would not remain in its communion another day, nor offer another prayer for its enlargement and prosperity. I am not a Baptist simply from education; certainly not from interest or convenience. Be assured, if I suspected myself not in "*the church*," I should be ill at ease, anxious to find it, and in haste to enter it. I may indeed be mistaken, as I assume that others are; but, with my present conviction, I must maintain and defend the authority of my church relations. I do not claim that we have all the truth, or that our polity is perfectly developed; certainly not in matters of practical detail. Like the Puritans, we "hold an open Bible and are waiting for more light." But I do claim that in the radical elements of organization, polity, doctrine, discipline, and or-

dinances, and also in the forms and spirit of Christian worship, Baptist churches are the veritable successors of the churches founded by the apostles.

The picture which a distinguished French historian draws of the primitive churches answers to the Baptist churches of America, as the photograph to the object. He says: "Baptism, which was administered by immersion, was the sign of admission into the church. The convert was plunged beneath the water, and he rose from it to be received by 'the laying on of hands.' Faith was the requisite of every candidate for baptism." The idea of faith in the primitive church was in harmony with its general constitution. Based upon living faith, this church was an association of Christians working together for their own edification and the evangelization of the world. Thus we have in the first century a true Christianity based upon a common faith—one Lord, one faith, one baptism. *One body.* And have we not the same in the nineteenth century in the Baptist churches of these United States? If any say no, let the unlikeness be shown.

NOT UNCHARITABLE.

It is a significant fact in this connection that the first reformed churches of Mexico, made up of persons who had left the Roman Catholic church and taken the New Testament for their guide, were essentially Baptists.

If it be said that the view taken in this discourse is exclusive and uncharitable, I admit the exclusiveness, but deny the uncharitableness. Truth must be exclusive toward error. I honor the high claims of Rome and the Episcopacy—I even honor their exclusiveness. I have far more fellowship with it than with the licentious liberalism which is opening upon our churches the flood-gates of error.

An Episcopal clergyman said to me lately: "I like the Baptists best of all the sects. I like them," said he, "for three things: *They believe something; they know what they believe; and they defend their faith lustily.*" An Episcopal

bishop at the dinner table was speaking pleasantly of the number that came to their ministry from other churches. I asked, "And do you have many from the Baptist ranks?" "Very few," he said; "and those who do come are poor dogs; for a Baptist who knows why he is a Baptist, will stick to his own church." We commend this severe but candid and just repartee to all whom it concerns. I can and do respect the conscientious convictions of others, and all the more for their fidelity to the same. But I must respect my own faith, and be true to my own understanding of the teachings and rulings of the word of God. Is there, then, no room for Christian liberty? Of course there is; for the right of conviction we claim for ourselves we cheerfully accord to others. We only ask to be allowed, without the scandal of bigotry and narrowness, to maintain the line of truth as we understand it, and to "give a reason for the hope that is in us."

There is a spiritual union, the fruit of evangelical experience, common to Christianity wherever found. In this sense all true Christians are one. Let Á Kempis, Paschal, Luther, Calvin, Howe, Baxter, Leighton, Scott, Whitefield, Wesley, Bunyan, Gill, Fuller, Ryland, Hall, and kindred representative names of our own day, meet and talk of the love of Christ; they will be found so perfectly joined in one mind, and spirit, and voice, that the world will be constrained to say, "Behold how these Christians love one another." "Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity." I despise all narrow, clannish bigotry, and I hold an open heart and hand to the faith of Jesus everywhere. The law of my Christian fellowship *has ever been, is,* and *by the grace of God shall be*, that of Paul, "Grace be with all who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity."

XIX.

SERMONS.

NOT FOR JESUS' SAKE ONLY.

John 12 : 9.—"Much people of the Jews therefore, knew he was there; and they came not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might see Lazarus also, whom he had raised from the dead"

The history of this passage you will at once recall. Jesus was at Bethany. He had raised Lazarus from the dead. And many, therefore, visited Bethany, "not for Jesus' sake only," *but that* they might also see Lazarus. It was not that Jesus was there as the Messiah, the Christ, the prophet of Israel, that they left Jerusalem, and thronged to the quiet hamlet of Bethany, but because their credulity, their curiosity had been excited by the report that a dead man had been brought back to life. It is not intimated that they had no regard for Christ. It is inferred they *had* such regard; but the ruling motive was not that they might see and hear Jesus himself, but that they might see a man who had been dead and was alive again. We can understand their motive.

The evangelist does not complain of this. He states it as a simple historical fact, showing with that beautiful simplicity, for which the Gospels are distinguished, that the popularity of Jesus even was somewhat adventitious. Some followed him attracted by the sublimity of his miracles, some by a selfish regard for the "loaves and the fishes," and a few from a deep and pervading love for and faith in him, in his divine character as the Son of God and Saviour of men.

And is there not reason to fear that this distinction still exists among his followers. Many now go to Bethany

"not for Jesus' sake only." In their Christian relations and actions, they are not controlled by an exclusive regard for Christ, his person, his work, his character, his authority. Let this simple negative view engage our thoughts. I suggest that it is eminently worthy of our regard because it involves radical elements of Christian character.

"Not for Jesus' sake only." Here are five small words. They scarcely form a sentence, and yet so searching are they that they encover the concealed forces of character, and discriminate between the seeming and the real, between the true and the false, between the dross and the pure gold. Let us for this occasion, cancel the "not," and make the phrase, "for Jesus' sake only," the theme of our thoughts and discourse to-day.

In this accidental phrase is found the germ of all godliness, the root of all holy vitality, the law of all true faith, and the inspiration of all true Christian experiences. Whatever is not done for Jesus' sake only is not well and rightly done. Our religion is true or false as an exclusive and supreme regard for Christ sanctifies or fails to sanctify the whole. And if this be so, if nothing but love to Christ be reliable, if all outside of this, however seeming, be but dross, how important we should know for what purpose we go to Bethany; whether for Jesus' sake only, or from curiosity, or whether the love of the marvelous takes us there.

Let us, therefore, consider this subject more specifically:

1. Are we then religious for Jesus' sake only? Religion is a mother of motive and purpose. Character is the outgrowth of principle. The value of our deeds is not so much in their material, as in their underlying spirit, the motive from which they spring, the end to which they look. If the motive be holy, the act is holy, even though the material be poor and worthless. And if the motive be unholy, the deed will be unholy, even though the material be rich and costly. After the highest type of legal completeness, God has more regard to quality than to quantity, and values spirit above matter

It is true, we are to judge men by their fruits. But since a fruit may be fair to the sight, while crude and sour, or have decay and rottenness at the core, so a fair outward obedience may be full of inward rottenness and spiritual decay. How much of what passes current for piety and religion, is often all adventitious and circumstantial, the manifest working of selfishness, the result of mere animal impulses and sympathies. It is at best a piety of form, a religion of ceremony, the fruit of education and culture. At most, a religion of the church, a sanctified habit, often, as in the case of the Bethany crowds, purely sensational, the naked expression of a morbid curiosity. We go to Bethany, but not for Jesus' sake only.

Now, why are we religious at all? Why are we at Bethany? It has been said that man is naturally religious, and in a sense this is true. Man has a religious nature and constitution, or rather a religious susceptibility, answering to his relations to God as his Creator and Father. He was made in the image of God. He has the religious capacity. If ignorant of God, yet he can be made acquainted with God. Unlike the brute, he is capable of the idea of God and worship. But while naturally religious, he has not by nature spiritual life; he is not by nature *Christian*. Human nature is dead in trespasses and sins, alienated from the life of God in the soul. In his natural state, man is Christless. Whether in the gross darkness of heathenism, or under the full light of a divine revelation, in his natural state, man is estranged from Christ, and destitute of salvation. The carnal mind is enmity to God, not subject to his law, and cannot be until the Spirit writes that law in his heart. The true Light is in the world and shineth in darkness, but the darkness comprehendeth it not. And in proportion as Christ in his true church, and the gospel as a revelation of truth and grace, press their claims with authority, in that proportion will they be resisted, and the latent elements of depravity be stirred and excited. Man is naturally religious, but not naturally Christian.

The wild Indian is a religious being in his way. The ignorant and imbruted Esquimaux are the same, after their sort. When the missionary dwelt upon the greatness and the power of God, they listened with haughty indifference. They replied: "You have come a great way to tell us what we have always known." They declared that if "it required human intelligence to form a canoe, do you think we cannot see that an infinite intelligence and power only could lay the foundations of the earth, and spread abroad the heavens? If this is all you have to tell us, you had better return to your homes." But when the missionary began to preach Christ and him crucified, as an expiation for sin; when he told them, "that God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him might not perish but have everlasting life"; and then to show them by the cross the exceeding sinfulness of sin and the criminality of unbelief, they became sullen, moody, and thoughtful. At length under the power of the Holy Ghost, they became penitent, believing, and loving; clothed in their right minds, sitting at the feet of Jesus.

Men are Christians only as they are created anew in Christ Jesus. I once heard the distinguished Orestes Bronson say, while attempting to excite the hopes of Roman Catholics for the conversion of America to the papacy, "that the great American heart was Christian." I thought at first he had been betrayed into one of his old Unitarian forms of speech. But I soon discovered that he simply meant that the American heart craved some kind of religion, and preferred a Christianity of rites and ceremonies, of forms and creeds, to the simple faith and naked culture of Prostestantism. And this is no doubt true. As a simple external service, Catholicism has been shrewdly adjusted to the appetites and cravings of the carnal hearts. Men do not object to worship in its outward attractions and forms. Men will go to Bethany, or Rome; synagogue, or chapel, or cathedral, if there be anything that appeals to a natural credulity. But when you come with a

simple gospel, demanding repentance, faith, and baptism, for Jesus' sake only, from a pure regard to his name and authority, how few will yield to your claim. They will go to Bethany—but not for Jesus' sake only.

What then is the nature of our faith, the spirit of our obedience? Is it adventitious, circumstantial, educational, speculative, emotional? Or is it out of a pure love to him, and with a simple reliance on him? Is it for Jesus' sake alone?

2. But let us pursue this inquiry still further. Is our faith for Jesus' sake only? Or has it an exclusive reference to him, and does it rest supremely in him, as the only foundation of our hope and confidence? You answer, "Yes." You *believe*. And believe Jesus of Nazareth to be the one foretold, and what the Scriptures declare him to be. But I mean something more than a mere historical faith. "The devils *believe*—and tremble." I mean trust, reliance, dependence, and such trust, reliance, dependence as leads us to commit our souls to him for salvation. Is our trust for salvation in him alone? Do we rest in him—in his word as our guide, in his Spirit as our sanctifier, and in his precious blood as our ransom, and in no other, and in nothng other?

This is the real question, and it is a question of momentous import to each one of us. Most men in a Christian community believe in Christ after some sort. But there is but one kind of faith that is saving. This is the point around which the human heart forever struggles. Here all the forces of unsanctified nature are marshaled in sharp conflict with truth. Here all the great battles between sin and holiness; a false and a true faith; the gospel of the blessed God and the philosophies of the world; condemnation and justification; in a word, the conflict between light and darkness, life and death, are constantly arrayed and maintained. The battle is always set in array and decided upon this line. Even where there is much true Christian experience, there is an unceasing conflict here. Nature is forever looking for another Saviour than Christ. Claiming something of its

own—seeking to mix its own righteousness with the finished work of the great atoning sacrifice.

There is nothing from which Satan strives so hard and so constantly to turn away the mind, as from the completed redemption of the cross. He will allow you to be pious, very pious; to go to Bethany as often as you please, providing you will give more heed to Lazarus than to Jesus. You can be orthodox, Papist, Episcopalian, Presbyterian, Methodist, Baptist, anything, everything, except to trust Christ, wholly and alone; except to make him final and supreme, your wisdom, sanctification, and redemption. To leave all and follow Christ alone, would make you such a Christian as Satan would prefer you should not be. With some kinds of professing Christians he has no very great controversy; but this sort he cannot away with.

This spiritual visiting of Bethany touches the questions of faith, and hope, and trust, for,

> My hope is built on nothing less,
> Than Jesus' blood and righteousness.
> Jesus, to thy dear wounds I fly,
> Cleanse thou my stains of deepest dye;
> O Lamb of God, for sinners slain,
> Wash thou away my crimson stain.

3. And now one more question. Is this rule the measure and gauge of our affections and our attachments? Of our ecclesiastical preferences and relations?

We respect religion and its ordinances. But so also do the devotees of superstition and false religions. They reverence their sacred places with an intensity of devotion worthy of a purer faith. It is not uncommon for persons from secular or social motives to become identified with some of the more popular sections of the Christian church. It may be a matter of interest, of business, or of social position exclusively. In portions of Europe, a person cannot hold office, or obtain a license to sell intoxicating drinks, or keep a gambling saloon, or receive still more degrading im-

munities, unless he has been christened in infancy, and is a member of the national church. And even where the Spirit's claims, and the Gospels are understood and acknowledged, there is reason to fear that Christ has often a secondary place in church relations and preferences. There has been, and still is, a great deal of idolizing the church, at the expense of her divine and glorious Head. Many will make long and wearisome pilgrimages to sacred places, kneel in the holy sepulchre and worship at a cross, who know nothing of the atonement which the cross symbolizes as the only way of our acceptance with God.

But it matters not how much zeal and devotion we may have, if they do not find their spring and inspiration in the faith and love of Christ. Indeed, the most ruinous and incurable heresies are those which spring from the outward attractions of religion, the adornments of the service, the pride of architecture, the flowing drapery, the tinsel and glitter of the ritual and the ceremony. Even our attachment to the church is only right as we love the church for Jesus' sake, who dwells in it, and whose body it is.

When John, under the flashing radiance of his celestial guide fell down at his feet in adoration, the angel cried out, "See thou do it not; worship God!" And do we not need to have written upon the walls of our sanctuaries the admonition, "Worship God"; especially in this materialistic and sensuous age, when men walk by sight and sound, more than by faith. Oh, if ceilings could speak, and stained glass and altar could speak, would they not repeat the angel's rebuke and say, "Worship God?" Indeed, I think the worship of the old idolaters, the adoration of sun, and moon, and stars, with all the hosts of heaven, was pure orthodoxy when compared with the modern worship of wood, and brick, and stone—of arch, and cornice, and ceiling, and dome, and towers; when compared with the worship of pulpit and orchestra, and with some of the assumptive, heartless, meretricious oratory of these degenerate days. It mat-

ters not what we worship, if we do not worship God in Christ—if we do not reach the Father through the Son.

4. And now, finally, let us test our obedience by this rule: The apostle says, "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin," and "Whatsoever ye do, whether in word or deed, do all to the glory of God." Whether ye eat or drink, buy or sell, rejoice or weep. This is very comprehensive and inclusive. It lays its authority upon our entire activities. It says that every act shall be under one ruling, one law; life shall be bound to one end, and ruled by one principle—the faith of Christ, the glory of God. If we go to Bethany, we must go for Jesus' sake *only*. It shuts us up to one rule of faith, and life, and worship.

But do not men everywhere act under one law? They may seem to live for many ends—wealth, reputation, pleasure, knowledge, culture. But one law underlies all these varied activities, and that is self-love, self-interest, self-exaltation, self-worship; *self* is everywhere the deity of this world, the idol of the natural, human heart. Men labor, toil, suffer, sacrifice for self. This is sin. This is the apostasy. The law of God says, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me," and "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." It puts God before self, Jesus before Lazarus. This law, so severe, does not take you out of the world, out of society, out of the family; it leaves a man in his workshop, on his farm, in his store; but it sets God before him, at his right hand, as David did, and says: "See God always, and make his glory the end of all you do."

"Lo, I am with you always," is the divine assurance. Always, and in every place; in cathedral and cabin, on the house-top or in the secret closet, on land or sea, in the crowded city or in the wilderness. The Bethany we seek may be on Olivet, or on Africa's burning sands; if in simple faith, and with an honest heart we seek Jesus, we shall find him, shall find him because he is ever with the pure in heart.

You have some regard for the Sabbath. Why? Is it to you the Lord's Day? The day of his resurrection, whose rising filled the valley of death with the radiance of immortality? You believe in baptism. Why? Is it because therein we are buried with him, and into the likeness of his death? You reverence the Lord's Supper. Why? Is it because he said, "This is my body, broken for you?" "This cup is the new covenant in my blood?" "This do in remembrance of me?" You have some regard for the preaching of the gospel, some interest in the ministrations of the sanctuary. How is that interest measured? What kind of preaching do you like best? That which comes commended by eloquence, and rhetoric, and poetry, and philosophy, and science, and the wisdom which man's words teach? Or that which presents the gospel naked and unadorned—Christ, the power of God, and the wisdom of God? If called to choose between the ministry of a cultivated mind, and an attractive address, without the gospel, and the teaching of some plain and humble minister, knowing nothing but Christ and him crucified, which would you choose? Not from cold calculation and a sense of duty, but from a spiritual and evangelical taste, and an affectionate preference for the one or the other?

Do you love the gospel stripped of its adornment? The naked cross, for the sake of him who died thereon? If called to choose between the splendor and fashion of an attractive worldly worship, and the poverty and humility of the gospel, which would you choose? Not from a sense of duty only, but from the spiritual relishment of faith and love? Suppose the Baptist church, as in former times, was found only in secret places, in private rooms and schoolhouses; would you still honor it, and seek the communion and fellowship of its services, "for Jesus' sake only?" Were the Baptist churches now, as once they were, made up of the poor—Christ's poor—would you still prefer their fellowship of poverty, to a fellowship of worldliness and

wealth, where Christ and his word are not? What if persecution should come, and the worship of God be exiled from the favor, and taste, and social alliances with which it is now almost everywhere asssociated? How many would brave the reproach of the world, and maintain their faith, for Jesus' sake only! Well, I am aware that no one can answer these questions, now and here, as they would in the midst of such tests and trials as are now suggested. But it is good to try the heart and conscience by even an imaginary test. And this is the rule and test, "For Jesus' sake only."

Nothing in religion is true that does not find its life here. What are sermons, praises, prayers, works, charities, professions, if not done for Jesus' sake only? Even though we speak with the tongue of men or of angels? Even though I give my goods to feed the poor, and my body to be burned, what profiteth *me*—it may profit others—if my love to Christ be not supreme? But a cup of cold water, given in the name of a disciple, and for Jesus' sake, shall not lose its reward. How little religion of this type is apparent, and yet here is the divine rule which cannot be changed or abrogated. All outside of this is but an empty and worthless mannerism, a pretense of religion. But the man who can say, this I do for Jesus' sake only, will do all he can, and continue to do it so long as life shall last. His religion will stand adversity, and it will endure prosperity, often a sorer trial to piety than is adversity. It will stand the storm and the calm, poverty and wealth. The fires cannot burn it, nor the floods overflow it.

When this principle rules in a church, there is nothing that needs to be done that cannot be done, and rightly, and timely, and cheerfully done. And this is the way to grow in grace. Oh, if ministers could write upon every sermon, "Preached for Jesus' sake only," and if churches could write upon every investment, on all securities, all increase of capital, all bank stock, every day's labor, "For Jesus' sake only," what a power would Christian life become, what

a mighty moral force would Christian churches be in the world. Then indeed, would their poverty abound to the riches of their liberality. Then too, the word of the Lord would sound out to all the ends of the earth. Make this the law of worship and of Christian service everywhere, in the sanctuary, the Sunday-school, the prayer meeting, and soon the peace of Zion would be like a river, and her righteousness like the waves of the sea. Then should the kingdoms of this world speedily become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ.

Jesus, I my cross have taken,
All to leave and follow thee.
Naked, poor, despised, forsaken,
Thou henceforth my all shall be.

THE POWER OF AN ENDLESS LIFE.

John 7: 16—"Who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life."

The aspostle, in this connection, is arguing the superiority of the gospel dispensation to that of Moses. It was a living question then, and holds a large place in all the Epistles. It was the great theological question of that day, and one of vital moment to the Jewish converts. The Jewish priesthood was changeable, because it was mortal. Its priests could not continue, because of death. Therefore, while the office was permanent, the priest was liable at any time to be removed, and another elected to fill his place. But Christ, because he "ever liveth," hath an unchangeable priesthood. Therefore, he is able to save unto the uttermost. "I am he that died, and behold I live again, and have the keys of death, and of hades." On down the ages, through generations and centuries, he lives and fills his priestly office, and presents an eternal sacrifice for all who came to God through him. He entered into the most holy place, even into heaven itself,

once for all, having obtained eternal redemption for us. He holds the power of an endless life, in that he died and rose again. Death hath no more dominion over him. Can you conceive the calamity, if Christ could die and his priesthood fail? In the nature of the case there could be no successor.

But I wish to dwell on the mighty thought involved in the expression, "The power of an endless life," and see, if possible, in what that power consists.

1. It is not simply endless existence. A stone, or clod of earth, may have existed for millions of ages, so far as we know. But, aside from the act of creation, there is no embodiment or suggestion of power in them. A stone tossed into the air returns to the earth again, but by no inherent power of its own. Its downward movement is the result of a certain natural quality of dead matter which we call gravitation. But so soon as you come to life, even in its lowest forms in the vegetable world, there is a manifestation of vital force, and the development of power. And in proportion to the duration of life will be the expenditure of force, the exhibition of power. The life of every plant, from the most delicate form in your garden to the giant trees of the forest, involves a specific amount of power, which can be estimated, measured, and registered. There is a force at work in all the vegetable kingdom, lifting up the vegetation with which the earth is clothed as with a garment of beauty, from the flowerage of the fields to the mighty forests, which cover with their shade the mountains and the plains.

What is that power? Who can tell? There is but one answer, and that is not an explanation, but only the simple statement of a fact, which leaves the mystery as profound as ever. It is the power of *life*. Life, working amidst the subtle elements of matter, working silently and invisibly, but mightily and constantly, through day and night, through heat and cold, with an unflagging energy and an unfaltering

purpose. What this life is, we do not know. We see its effects in ten thousand forms of beauty, but the life itself we do not see. We see the plants, the flower, the tree, but the life that makes them, the energy that throbs and pulsates in them, is too subtle to be detected by the most powerful microscope, or the most searching chemical analysis. Go into one of our manufactories. You see on every hand the evidence of power. But the power itself you do not see. The moving energy is hidden from your sight. Thus, what the power of life is, what the force that opens the rose bud, that lifts the branches of the oak to heaven, we cannot tell. Some forms of vegetable life are very frail and transient. They continue but a little time, a month, a week, a day, or an hour. From whence comes the transient life, or whither it vanishes, no man knows. Other forms, like forest trees, have a tenacity that holds on through ages and centuries. Try to estimate the amount of vital force in one of those old patriarchs of the forest. There it has stood a living thing, a thousand years old when America was discovered, a thousand years old when Columbus first touched these shores, when Cortez first saw the palaces of the Montezumas, when Balboa, from the heights of the Andes, looked down upon the placid waters of the Pacific Ocean. There it has stood in its place, rooted to the everlasting hills, battling with the elements, defying the tornadoes and the earthquakes, contending for existence, fighting for the right to be and to live through the sweep of ages. And there it may stand for ages yet to come. I do not wonder that the superstitious have been inclined to invest these grand old trees with a kind of divinity, and to worship in their venerable shade. I dwell upon these illustrations to enable you the better to gain some idea of this thought—the power of an endless life.

And now I wish to emphasize the thought that it is the power of an endless human life, the endless life of the human soul, which this sentence involves. Immortality, the life everlasting, in which consists its power. It is a vast

thought. And the conception has a vast range and sweep. Too vast, it might be supposed, for finite minds, and too high for practical ends. But there are some plain inferences and uses which seem to me comprehensible and profitable.

1. And, first of all, we must assume and affirm that life in every form, from its lowest to its highest type, from the worm to the angel, is the work of divine power—the creation of God. God only hath immortality. The past, the present, and the future, are all his. God only hath life in himself. Of him only can it be said. "He was, and is, and is to come." I am; but there was a time when I was not. The earth, the sun, the material universe are; but once they were not. God is "the eternal *I am*." From everlasting to everlasting. "Before the mountains were brought forth, or even thou hadst formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God." "Thou leavest man to destruction." Yes, indeed; we are of yesterday, and perish like the grass. Our life is as a vapor; like the morning cloud, and the early dew. Compared with the oak, our life is but a transient breath, an arrow's flight.

But, "if a man die shall he live again?" That is the great agonizing question of the human soul. Is this life all? Men say, if this be all, the life is not worth living. I do not wonder they say so. The argument for immortality from reason, however specious and hopeful, is far from being satisfactory. It amounts to a strong presumption only, not to certainty. The most that human wisdom ever presumed to say was, and is, "If there be another life." That is as far as the philosophy of the world, whether in ancient or in modern times, ever reached. But life and immortality are brought to light in the gospel. Jesus Christ said: "I have power to lay down my life, and have power to take it again." It was no idle boast. He did both. The holy temple they destroyed on Calvary's cross, he raised up again on the third day, and over him, from that day forth, death had no more

power. He went down into the grave, and then came back from the dead, showed himself alive to his disciples by many infallible signs and proofs, during forty days eating and drinking with them, giving them instructions concerning his kingdom, and then ascended to heaven in their sight. Then and there, on Olivet, the great problem of an endless life was solved, and the kingdom of immortal glory was opened to all believers in the risen Lord.

Life in all its forms is the gift of God; and the "unspeakable gift" of God, is Jesus Christ, who is "the resurrection and the life." And the infinite gift of Christ to his people is "eternal life." "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. And I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, and no one shall be able to pluck them out of my Father's hand." And this is all "according to the hope of eternal life which God promised in Christ Jesus, before the world began." It does not matter when the world began, the purpose of the gospel antedates it, and the world was made for it.

And I wish to emphasize the thought that the eternal life of the gospel is more than eternal existence, more than an endless succession of ages, of conscious being, and a sense of personal identity. God might will the brute creation to exist forever, as some suppose they will. But that would not be eternal life, in the New Testament sense of that term. If the old philosophers might be supposed to be alive, if they have reached no higher plane than their philosophy, they would not have the eternal life of the gospel. Still, eternal duration, endless existence, is, so to speak, the plane and measure of its power. Having begun, it never ends. It is a light that will never go out. A stream that will flow on forever. The sun may cease to shine from exhaustion, and in the far distant cycles of measureless time, the solar universe may have a universal night. But the eternal life, which Christ gives, is as enduring as the being of God himself.

2. But this endless life reaching up into the endless ages, and so rich in all the possibilities of an endless existence, in its beginning is very small. It is but a germ, a seed, a mere atom. But it is *life* that guarantees its immortality. Smaller than the mustard seed, so small that no eye, but that of God can see it. The germs of physical life, both animal and vegetable, in its last analysis is a minute cell, so small as to the naked eye to be invisible, and nothing but the most powerful glass can detect its presence, and even that cannot discern the vital parts. The atmosphere, we are told, swarms with animated dust. And so soon as these germs are brought under the proper conditions they develop life, and take on forms of beauty, and move to their appointed place and mission in the great universe of God.

So the life of God in the soul is first a conception, then a birth. Its infant state is so feeble as to give slight indications of future development and strength. The beginning may be but a word, a conviction, a tear, a sigh; but like the seed, it has all the elements, all the latent possibilities of the life everlasting. The majestic rivers take their rise far back on some mountain side, in some wooded dell, where a small streamlet bubbles from the earth or trickles from the rock. And even back of these, in misty vapor exhaled from the ocean, to fleck the sky with beauty and cover the face of the sun with its fleecy veil, and then fall in refreshing showers on the earth. And it were no marvel, if the endless life, swelling and overflowing its banks, spreading fertility in its course, should take its rise in the convictions and humilities of Christian experience and culture. As a matter of fact, it never rises elsewhere. The gospel comes into the world with this announcement, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Christ began his mortal life, not with the powers of an angel, not with the station of a prince or conqueror, nor yet in the full maturity of manhood, but as a little child, as the infant of Bethlehem, in a sphere of comparative obscurity.

And all his life was on the same plane of humility. But the child grew and waxed strong in spirit, and the grace of God was on him. He was meek and lowly in heart. When he saw ambition, and lust of power, and pride of position among his followers, he took a little child and sat him in the midst of them and said, "Except ye become as a little child ye shall not enter into the kingdom of God." This endless life has its beginning in infancy and childhood.

Science is pushing its way back into the most subtle possibilities of matter to find the primal act of creation. Our teachers in science take a piece of granite and reduce it to powder, then to a liquid, then pass it off into vapor and gas, and then sagely tell us that the earth and solar system were once vapor and gas. Be it so; but the creation, and combination, and consolidation were the result of power. So with life. It is often so frail that it seems like a mere gossamer thread, which a breath might sunder. A flame so frail that a breath might extinguish it. But from that little atom and spark of vitality often comes forth a mind, which, as in the case of Newton, measures the heavens with a rod, and weighs the universe in a balance. Who could have predicted that in such a small bit of humanity such vast possibilities of thought and intellect lay concealed? Who could have dreamed that in one small skull lay dormant a power that in the course of forty years would track the course of planets, map out the heavens with mathematical precision, and revolutionize the physical sciences. And if the simple power of intellectual life be so great, what possibilities of spiritual power may not be hidden in the life of the soul?

2. And this leads me to say that this endless life has also the power of development, growth, and progress.

A single grain of wheat possesses the power of reproduction and multiplication, which in a few years would cover the earth with its harvests. And life on the spiritual plane has a similar fruitfulness. The history of Christianity illustrates this truth. From the humble cradle of Bethlehem,

from the lowly childhood of Nazareth, from the boats and nets and fishermen of Galilee, the gospel has gone forth to the conquest of the world, proving that it possesses the powers of an endless life. Jesus said, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." And John the Baptist declared of him, "He must increase, but I must decrease." And that increase, not for a year, a generation, an age, but to the end of the ages; deepening, widening, rising with the powers of an endless life. His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and his dominion knows no end. His throne shall remain as long as the sun and the moon. The stone cut from the mountains shall fill the earth.

> Jesus shall reign where e'er the sun,
> Doth his successive journeys run.
> His kingdom spread from shore to shore,
> Till moons shall wax and wane no more.

Bonaparte once said, when discoursing with some of his companions in exile who were skeptical, "I have attempted to found an empire on force, and it has crumbled to ruin about me. Jesus Christ, two thousand years ago, founded a kingdom on love, and after nearly twenty centuries of opposition, hatred, persecution, and martyrdom, that kingdom remains unshaken, grows with the growing years, and wears the freshness of immortal youth. And to-day there are millions who would lay down their lives for him. I tell you, gentlemen, Jesus Christ was the Son of God."

Indeed he was the Son of God. "All hail the power of of Jesus' name." Now unto him who loved us, and gave himself for us, and washed us in his precious blood, be glory and honor, dominion and power, everlasting.

3. And this leads us to consider further, that this life is enduring, not only in its organic and co-operate form, as seen in the endurance and growth of Christian churches, but also, and especially as it maintains its power in the human soul, lifting it into a sphere of progress in the realm of an endless existence.

There are some plants which flower but once in a hundred years; during that hundred years they are slowly, but constantly maturing for that final perfection of their being, the flowerage and the fruitage. Now a century seems a long probation in the vegetable kingdom. I do not wonder that multitudes flock to see the century plant in bloom—an event that comes but once in a hundred years. But what if the flowerage of the church's life were but centennial? Even then it would be a thing of beauty and of joy, worthy the admiration of men and of angels. But the power of an endless life in the true Christian church is not simply centennial, or even annual, it is constant and perpetual; a voice that is never silent, a heart-beat that never fails.

The trees which John saw on the banks of the river of life, brought forth their fruits every month, and the leaves, with perpetual salutary power, were for the healing of the nations. An impressive type of this endless life in the soul, making it beautiful with fruits, and fragrant with the charms of immortality; its saving and health-giving energy for all the nations of the earth.

4. But, still further, we must not fail to notice that this life possesses the capacity for endless culture, improvement, and progress. It is estimated that the average duration of life is about thirty-three years, or one-third of a century. If we deduct from this brief space, infancy and childhood, sleep and needed rest, with periods of sickness, and many inevitable interruptions, we reduce its available time for culture and work, for purposeful and productive activity, to one half of that period, or less. And yet within this narrow space what wonders have been wrought, and what achievements have been made in self-discipline and culture, in mental training and the acquisition of knowledge. It is marvelous what some men have accomplished in the brief, and hurried, and hindered period of a single lifetime. They have sought out and determined the laws of nature, solved some of the profound problems of the universe, and laid

open the mysteries of creation. They have caught the lightning, tamed and trained it, sent it round the earth to do their bidding, and, with a tongue of flame, to tell their thoughts and repeat their messages to the nations. By the subtle analysis of light they have determined the laws of the planetary universe.

Men work in the fields of science with a devotion which confounds our estimates and commands our admiration; with a search for truth and a thirst for knowledge, more intense, if possible, than man's greed for gold. Now suppose some of these toilers for science could live and work a thousand years, and their progress could be in the same ratio as their improvement during the brief life they now live? It passes the imagination to measure the vast proportions of what they might accomplish, and what they might become. Suppose Newton and his fellow-laborers in the fields of physical science, could have lived and carried forward their discoveries and their studies until this time? But our ripest scholars and most vigorous thinkers are cut down in the midst of their labors, and leave their work to others. And their successors have to take up this labor and this work from their hands and carry it forward with whatever ability they may possess.

Suppose the apostle could have lived and continued his labors among the Gentiles for the evangelization of the world till the present time, 1881? What an accumulation of power, experience, and wisdom, in a ministry of twenty centuries, would have been his, and ours, and the world's, in the fruits of righteousness from such a ministry. A man dies in the full flush of his manhood, just as he is looking out upon the world, girding himself for more heroic conflicts. Sometimes a man is cut down in the maturity of his manhood, while dealing valiant and sturdy blows in the interest of humanity and truth, and we feel that the world has suffered a great loss. And that is true. It is sad to have a life with vast possibilities of good interrupted. A shining

light put out. A star fall from heaven. But we do not know all its meaning.

A good life, a true life, is the most precious thing in the world, and could it have time for maturity and development, its power for good would seem to be almost boundless. The Psalmist lived a long life, and served his generation, by the will of God, but he became an old man, and it was finally written, "The prayers of David, the son of Jesse, are ended." The patriarchs lived many years, but of each finally, history inscribed, "And he died." But the life we are considering is endless, and involves the accumulation of power from uninterrupted growth and progress. And so we reach the culmination of this subject. This endless life has a power which defies death, and survives the grave. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. "Then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. Oh, death, where is thy sting! Oh, grave, where is thy victory!" And then this endless life will begin its more glorious career, develop its latent energies, clothe itself with the radiant glories of paradise, and shine in the light of immortality and heaven.

5. And, finally, let us reflect: Who can estimate its prospective resources of power and blessedness? Who can imagine its possibilities of experience and growth in culture of all the elements of holy and lofty character, in all the attainments of knowledge and wisdom, which this endless life involves? In the sweep of the long cycles of eternity, to what magnitude of greatness, to what ranges of vision upon the outlying ways and works of God may not the souls of the redeemed and sanctified attain. I do not wonder Paul calls it "an eternal weight of glory," or that he should exclaim, "Oh, the depth, both of the wisdom and power of God; how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out."

The power of an endless life! Who can estimate it, as it reaches upward in an endless flight amidst the splendors of

the New Jerusalem? Now we see through a glass darkly. Now we know only in part. Then we shall have the vision and intuition of angels. Here education and development are mechanical and laborious. Then it shall be with the flash of thought, and the discernment of spiritual intuition. Just as after the most laborious study the truth seems to elude your grasp, but afterward comes to you with the suddenness and force of a revelation, as a voice from heaven, so this endless life will bring with it facilities for the acquisition of knowledge and improvement, beyond our present highest powers of conception. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard," what the future holds for God's regenerated people.

And, now; is this endless life ours? Has it transformed our hearts? Have its convictions, humilities, and holy energies been awakened in us? Is Christ, "who is our life," formed in us, "the hope of glory?" "He that believeth on me hath eternal life." For, "I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish."

My Father's house on high,
Home of my soul, how near;
At times, to faith's discerning eye,
Thy golden gates appear.

Oh, how my spirit faints,
To see the home I love,
The blest inheritance of saints,
Jerusalem above.

ASK FOR THE OLD PATHS.

Jer. 6: 16.—"Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls."

A thing is not to be valued simply because it is old. A great many corrupt customs and usages have come down from a very distant past. Indeed, sin itself can plead a very

high antiquity. Besides, we all know there is a veneration for the past in matters of religion, which is but another name for the most blind and degrading superstition. It is this which gives value to sacred relics, the bones of saints, pieces of the cross, and other pretended sacred things, opening the way for those shameless impositions of Rome practiced upon her deluded children. It is this which takes men on pilgrimages to the "holy places" in and about Jerusalem. It is the same superstition which leads the thousands of devoted papists to St. Peter's and the Vatican, and the equally devout Moslem to Mecca and the tomb of the false Prophet.

But reverence for the old is not therefore always to be condemned. Regard for the past is not always superstition. There is a veneration for religious antiquity highly commendable and truly Christian, and therefore authoritative and obligatory. And so we are commanded to contend earnestly, and in the text, to inquire diligently for the old paths. There is an inordinate tendency in the human mind to trace things back to their sources. When we notice a river, as laid down on the map, we naturally follow it up through all its windings to its source in the mountains. Scholars, with laborious care and careful scrutiny, follow the currents of history back till they lose their path in the mazes of story and of fable. Every family well nigh believes it can trace its descent from some ancient, honorable, and honored stock.

But beneath all this seeming childishness, lies an important principle, a commendable sentiment. It is this: that truth, in its elements, in its original types, is unchanging; it is always and everywhere the same. The diamond is a diamond wherever found. There is a simplicity in its substance which admits of no commixture, and scarcely of variety. The same is true, to a large extent, of the precious metals. Light is everywhere and under all conditions the same, when you reach its simple elements. And in proportion as you ascend to the more subtle and imponderable forms of

matter will you find it approach to a simple base, making a wonderful unity in nature. This is seen in the correllation and conservation of forces, tending to the rapidly maturing conclusion that nature, or the universe, is everywhere, in all its varied changes and diversified modes of action, yet ruled by one force and subject to one law. All seeming contrariety and diversity is found to be but varied operations of one absolute and changeless unity.

Truth, a true church, a changeless gospel, are in their original elements the same. I know that the popular teaching just now is, according to the evolution theory, that animals, and vegetables, and everything that hath life, improve by culture. That higher types are educed from lower ones. We are sagely told that the wheat which waves in golden luxuriance over our western prairies was once but a worthless wild grass, upon the cold, bleak tablelands of northern Asia. And that the glossy kine of Devonshire, less than a century ago, were a shabby and worthless race, less attractive and leaner than Pharaoh's under the seven years of Egyptian famine. This all may be. But those were not the primitive types. They were degenerate. I claim that the wheat of Eden was of the finest quality, and better than the best our modern culture can boast. I claim that at first there was perfection in the Creator's works, from which all have declined with the wreck and fall of man from his original perfection. With sin came degeneration of every kind. The earth was cursed for man's sake, and even till now the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together. The animal and vegetable creations, when they culminated in Eden, were perfect.

So with religious truth. The old paths are here commended to our regard, because they are the right paths, and the best. By paths, let us understand *doctrines*. The precepts, institutions, and ordinances of religion. The divinely appointed ways in which men should walk in their relations to God and their fellow-men.

It is implied in the text that these old paths may be forgotten or forsaken. And the religious history of the race proves the implication just. Indeed, in nothing is the depravity and perversity of human nature more plainly manifested than in religious degeneracy—a departure from the original standards of divine revelation, and an experimental religion. There is in the race an almost invincible proneness toward backsliding and apostasy. We walk in the light which God gives us but a little while. If he revives his work, and, as he has often done, brings up his church out of Egypt, or the wilderness, and clothes her anew with salvation, it is but a short time before the glory will decline, her strength become weakness, and she will have strayed from the old paths, and again be lost in the wilderness.

As a path little used soon becomes indistinct and with difficulty traced, so the old paths of religion, if not constantly trodden, become overgrown with a rapid and luxurious crop of worldliness. Even those who desire to find them have not an easy task. They have to stand, and see, and inquire for the old paths, and find them only after the most diligent and painstaking search.

Suppose John Wesley should come back, and go into some cathedral-like Methodist church, in one of our large cities, what would he be likely to say? If some of our Baptist fathers should return and visit some of our New England churches, witness their forms of worship, and listen to the preaching, I fear they would hardly recognize a family resemblance to the Baptists of their day, whom they did so much to found and build up. But we wish the old paths, not because they are of the fathers, but because they are of God, and have his approval, and lead to the green pastures of his love and grace. Because they are of Christ, and the apostles, and the primitive church. The text commands us to inquire for them, to search for them, as one would for hid treasures, as though these alone led to salvation and heaven. We want primitive types, the oldest forms, the true originals.

We must go back of synods, and councils, and traditions, and creeds, back to the word of God itself. To the autograph records of God's unerring truth, if these can by any possibility be found. Anything lower than this we may be sure will degenerate. But the word of the Lord abideth forever. "To the law and the testimony."

1. We want the *old theology*. In other words, the pure, simple gospel as it came from the lips and the life of Christ, and was proclaimed and spread abroad by his apostles. The gospel of salvation, by faith in the Son of God, the Saviour of the world. And we want it in its primitive simplicity, as a testimony from heaven, and as a revelation of grace to a lost world. And we want it in its fullness, as a finished salvation, as a perfect righteousnesss, an accomplished redemption, free grace, without money and without price.

The basis of the New Testament theology is grace; its alpha and omega, its first and its last. Grace is the warp and woof inwrought into the fabric of the New Testament truth and salvation, in all its parts. In our religious relations we want the gospel exclusively. Paul declared that he determined to know nothing among the Corinthians but Christ and him crucified. For religious edification, for character culture, for comfort and peace, we need the gospel, and accept that only. But we prefer it in its naked simplicity, as God has given it, without the cheap tinsel decorations with which some of its pretended friends have tricked it out, to make it more acceptable or more attractive to those who by nature have no love for it. As food is more nutritious in its natural purity, as the combinations of the natural landscape are infinitely richer in beauty than the most labored arrangement of art, so with the gospel of the blessed God. So the theology of the New Testament, for all purposes of sanctification and church growth, is infinitely above all the attempted improvements of modern scholars and of modern pulpits. You cannot have strong men, if constantly fed on candies and sweetmeats. Nor can you have strong

Christians under the highly seasoned ministrations of many modern pulpits.

The pulpit is the last place where a man can properly affect style and finish. The apostle declared that he did not come to the people with the excellency of speech which man's wisdom teacheth. Not at all. But in the fullness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ. A man in earnest, with something important to say, never stops to think how he is to say it. I utter no plea for rudeness in the pulpit. Not even for carelessness of language in his addresses. But of the two evils I would certainly prefer an honest bluntness, and even coarseness, with a straightforward, home-thrusting pungency, to that excessive refinement that goes into hysterics over a breach of grammar, or an incorrect pronunciation, but which can tolerate any amount of heresy, provided it be rhetorically written and eloquently spoken.

When an English bishop lay dying, he sent for one of his chaplains to pray with him. So the chaplain took out his prayer book, to find the proper prayer to read. "No," said the bishop, "not that now. No reading of prayers here. Pray for me as you would like me to pray for you, if you were dying." And ought we not to pray and preach as dying men to dying men? Would not that be walking in the old paths? We want the same gospel which Paul, and Peter, and John, which Stephen, and Philip, and Apollos preached. The old gospel has a peculiar sound. It was cast and toned in heaven. And whenever that harp is struck it fills the air with a sacred melody.

I heard on one occasion two sermons on the same day, at an Association; one in the forenoon, the other in the afternoon. The young man who preached was a city pastor, very much esteemed. The old man, a country pastor, who had held the same pulpit for many years, much honored and beloved. The young man's sermon was well written, well delivered, and made a favorable impression as to the preacher's ability. The old man's sermon was simple, homely, terse

Saxon words and sentences. But, though small at first, it grew as he proceeded, and at the close broke in a baptism of spiritual power over the audience. It was in demonstration of the Spirit, and with power.

When the king reproved one of his bishops for going to hear John Bunyan preach, the bishop replied: "May it please your majesty, I would gladly exchange my rich benefice, exchange my learning, and lay aside the honors of my bishopric, if I could preach the gospel like this poor tinker of Elstow." "Not by words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth." And to this end, "That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God." The faith that is born of words, and nourished by words, will be effeminate and sickly. But the Spirit and the truth of God make moral and religious heroes. They endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ.

2. And this leads us on to consider that we need, and are likely to find in the old paths alone, the *old ministrations of the Spirit.* I use the term *old,* not as implying that there is, or can be any new ministration of the Spirit, but in distinction from what claims the ministration of the Holy Ghost. As Paul says to the Galatians, "I marvel that ye are so soon turned away to another gospel." That is, it is no gospel at all. It is a pretense, a sham, a fraud. The world is full of religious frauds. Not only the more gross and revolting forms of error and delusion, which are not so very dangerous. Indeed, I think heresies are sometimes useful. They help to carry off and free the religious body politic of noxious sentiments, and purify the prevailing religious atmosphere, bringing about a better state of spiritual health. In a sanitary point of view, it is a great advantage for a community to have some general outlet for sewerage, into which all the impurities which breed malaria can be turned. It is an advantage for a church to be relieved of those vicious and corrupting elements which disturb its

peace, and threaten its prosperity and perhaps its life. It is better to cut out a fatal cancer, or amputate a mortified limb, and thus save the whole body.

And when a church neglects to purify itself by the discipline which God has enjoined, when from a false tenderness they spare a fruitful evil, healing slightly the wound, or building with untempered mortar, it were no marvel if the walls came tumbling down, and that God should withhold his special blessing. The perverse elements will be likely to corrupt the faith of the church which has not fidelity or courage sufficient to put them away. But the evil of which I am speaking is more insidious and more dangerous. The apostles claimed that they ministered the gospel under the influence of a peculiar inspiration, or power, or unction. It was not simply a testimony, a statement of facts, an appeal, an exhortation. It was all these, but it was more. It was God's message to men. It was the power of God unto salvation. For this reason Paul declared that he was not ashamed of the gospel of Christ. In its simplest utterances it possessed an inherent power which carried it to the hearts of men with convicting and saving effect. It was this by which the three thousand were saved. It was this that awakened the jailer, and opened the heart of Lydia. It was this which arrested Saul of Tarsus, the fiery and infuriated persecutor and slayer of the disciples, and transformed him into the great apostle to the Gentiles, and made him build the faith he once destroyed.

You may affect and attract men on a lower plane of spiritual life, and bring them into the church, and keep them there for a time. But you cannot regenerate them, you cannot Christianize them without the ministration of the Spirit. That experiment has been tried in a variety of ways, but always with one and the same result—a failure. Go into Central Asia, or among the Indian tribes, and see the result of Roman Catholic missions. They made converts—in a plenty. But they did not make them Christians. They

baptized them, gave them a Christian name, taught them the ritual, to do penance and say prayers. But all that can be done without the Spirit. And it is often done by others than Catholics. Here is a point we are called on to guard. In the matter of salvation we may trust nothing but the power of God. Even the apostles were commanded not to begin the work of evangelization till they were endued with power from on high.

What is needed to give the gospel success, is the power of God on the ministry and on the membership. Anything less will be a failure. Power, power! In the pulpit, in the prayer meeting, in the Sunday-schools, in Christian homes, in the business places of Christian men, in the social gatherings of Christian women, in all places of religious influence. "Pray for us," said the apostle, "that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified."

A minister who had an appointment to preach at a private house, retired to his room for prayer. The congregation gathered, but the preacher did not come. Some one was sent to tell him that the people were waiting for him. But the messenger returned without the minister, and reported that he was talking with some one in the room, for he heard him say, "I will not go except thou go with me." And when the preacher finally came in to address the people, there was another came with him sure enough, whose presence was immediately felt; even the Spirit of truth and grace. He preached as he had never preached before.

A young college student, a confirmed skeptic, composed himself to sleep during an evening's service, which by the college rules he was compelled to attend. But he awoke just in time to hear the preacher repeat the text as he completed the service and took his seat. He heard no more. But that text, under the over-shadowing presence of God, went to his heart, and left a wound which the blood of Christ alone could heal. The presence and power of the Spirit can cause small gifts, broken language, stammering utterances, and

even silent ordinances to become the ministers of grace and salvation to men.

3. And so I pass to say, briefly, that we need the *old worship.*

I do not so much mean in the exact forms, as in its spirit, indwelling power, and vital efficacy. I think it is easy to see what was substantially the worship of the early churches. It consisted in the orderly reading of the Scriptures, expounding certain portions, prayer, exhortation, and singing of psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, making melody in their hearts to the Lord. Every part was spiritual. I do not mean that mental culture was excluded, but that the spiritual was regnant in each and every part. An exposition not imbued with the Spirit's power, would not have been very much thought of in such a service. A sermon, however intellectual and logical, if not enlivened by spiritual warmth, would not have been held as orthodox in apostolic times. And the same may be said of the more strictly devotional parts of service; such as prayer, singing, and exhortation. Now we want this old style of worship restored. We have made the experiment of the formal sort, and find that for evangelical uses it avails little.

Richard Hildreth says he never understood the hold that Roman Catholicism had on the masses until he visited Italy. He went into the splendid cathedrals, and saw the pageantry of the worship in its most imposing forms, conducted by the gorgeously robed cardinals, with hundreds of the lower clergy. All was grand and imposing, with music of the most artistic and exquisite style and execution. But there was nothing to touch the heart and minister to the sensibilities. And so the people were not there. It was a sort of dumb show, for the satisfaction of the performers themselves, and a few curious visitors. And he was at a loss to know how the Romish church possessed so strong a hold on the faith and reverence of the masses. But when he wandered through the country, and went into the village

churches always open for the entrance of the people, he found solitary worshipers, who had turned aside for a few minutes to rest and worship, on their knees before the shrines and images, seeking, though in a mistaken way, to gain a nearer approach to the Father of spirits, through those whom they had been taught to regard as intercessors. With a better knowledge of the divine method, how, with an equal sincerity and a more intelligent faith, ought we to maintain a stronger current of spiritual life in our worship.

Formal worship is everywhere equally worthless. It does not make us better or happier. It does not feed our religious life. It may meet the requirements of custom, it may satisfy educational and worldly demands; but a true Christian faith, and a real spiritual life, cry out for something better fitted to their nature, and therefore to their needs, something that will bring the soul nearer to God.

4. We also want the *old experience*.

The experimental workings of religion in the soul, or the witness of the Spirit in the heart, must be everywhere alike. In one of the churches of which I have been pastor, I became very familiar with the only other pastor in the place. Well, in our talks about religion, I found that while we used the same ecclesiastical and theological terms, we used them in very different senses. We attached very different meanings to the same words. By experiencing religion, he meant learning the catechism and joining the church. By regeneration, he meant baptism. And by living a Christian life, he meant observing Lent and keeping the fasts of the church, as appointed by authority.

There is danger of losing sight of the old landmarks of Christian experience, everywhere apparent at the present day. The work of substitution, or of putting one thing in place of another, is one of Satan's most sagacious methods of deception. He deals very largely in counterfeits. Adulterations and masked batteries he well understands the value of in his work. If you insist on an experimental religion,

he will furnish a false type, with strong external resemblance to the true. If revival power possess the church, he will become wonderfully zealous in this direction, and seek to decoy you into premature conclusions, and stop the work short of a radical change of heart and a sound conversion, and so make the work spurious, a worthless imitation.

All true Christian experience must spring from the germs of Christian truth, as to the depravity of the human heart, the evil nature of sin, the need of an atonement, and the preciousness of Christ's mediation. A man and his wife, who had been received in a Unitarian church, came to an evangelical pastor, and said, "We have not settled the question of the Trinity; but we have heard you preach, and we feel that the gospel which you preach is just what we need and have long been looking for." And, as you may judge, it did not require much time or labor to instruct them in the ways of the Lord more perfectly. They were soon happy in the assured love of a Saviour, who is "the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth," and also, who is able to save unto the uttermost all "who come to God through him."

"I write unto you no new commandment," said John, "but the old commandment which ye have had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which ye heard." "The faith once for all delivered to the saints," is the faith of all ages, and for which we are most earnestly to contend. Let us, therefore, hold fast the profession of our faith, firm unto the end.

THE LIFE TO COME.

Job. 14 : 8.—"If a man die, shall he live again?"

This is a great question. Back of all subtleties and philosophies touching the "life that is," lies the deeper question of the life that is to come. Beneath the agitated surface of

human thought, deeper than business, deeper than social relation, deeper than pleasure, there are currents of anxious thought, setting out strongly toward the shore of the unknown world, toward the hope of another life. It is the question of all conditions, from childhood to age—from the lowest paganism to the highest form of Christian civilization.

The first question which the opening mind asks as it begins to look out and ponder thoughtfully the phenomena of life and death, is that of the text, "If a man die, shall he live again?"

In the lips of Job this question is more than four thousand years old, and from the day that sin entered the world, and death by sin, it has come down to us, the great problem of the generations and ages. Every couch of mortal struggle, every place where are found the sick and the dying, every funeral procession, every burial ground, every monument for the dead, the weeds of mourning and the sable vestments of sorrow all ask, "If a man die, shall he live again?" The battlefields, where life is poured out and death revels in carnage, ask, "Shall these mutilated forms and mangled corpses live again?" And the sea asks, of the thousands consigned to its unknown depths, "Shall these live again?" Shall the sea give up its dead—the dead of a thousand generations, over whom the waves of ages have rolled?

Can this question be solved? With thoughtful minds it is a question of intense and consuming interest. In the very nature of things it must be so, because it is a personal question of life and death for eternity. Is there any doubt about this matter? Is the life to come a contingency, a problem yet to be solved; something assumed, but not demonstrated; at most and best, a hope, an expectation, a desire, a trust, a faith; or is it a fact revealed, declared, promised, and confirmed beyond contingency or rational doubt? Let us look at this subject with dispassionate reverence and thoughtfulness, for it is too sacred for irreverence, and too

deep for trifling. "Fly, ye profane; if not, draw near with solemn awe."

Now in answer to this question, "If a man die, shall he live again?" there are some things which seem to say "No," and some that positively say "Yes." Do not be startled at this admission, for if there be a negative seeming, it is far better to admit it and look it fully in the face, than by ignoring to leave it unanswered, to excite incredulity, and to nourish skepticism. The best way to settle doubts of any kind is to solve them. "Truth," says Milton, "was never yet worsted in a fair conflict with error"; and the scriptural doctrine of another life has nothing to fear from a candid admission and examination of facts and conditions that might seem to be against it.

1. First of all, then: Death itself seems to say "No"; to say that a dead man shall *never* live again. Death is the absence of life, and is everywhere regarded as a hopeless state. If an animal die, you do not expect it to live again; if a tree perish, you do not expect to see it revive and be again clothed with verdure and bloom. If you simply cut it down and leave life in the roots, as Job says, "through the scent of water it will bud and bring forth boughs like a plant," but if the vital principle be thoroughly and totally destroyed you do not hope it will live again. In all such cases, death is a finality, admitting of no returning life.

Another tree of the same kind may be generated from the seed, but by no possibility can life be restored to an animal or plant from which it has been taken; the vital flame once extinguished can never be rekindled, and with man death has all the *seeming* of a kindred finality.

In itself considered, it seems to be the end of man. There is the same prostration of the body, the same blight of physical beauty, the same extinction of vital forces, and the same speedy dissolution and decay of material elements. Even where the attempt is made to preserve the body by embalming, there is nothing but the blighted, wasted wreck,

the painful, revolting mockery of life. Nowhere does death, as the utter extinction of life, reign with such absolute sway as in the Eastern mausoleums, where the bodies of a thousand generations are still found, as in the pyramids of Egypt. Not one of all these millions of bodies, preserved with so much costly care, and for the guarding of which these royal palaces of death were reared, has returned to life again. Where they were placed there they have remained, more lifeless, if possible, than the damp, dead walls by which they are surrounded. Sometimes the body of a sweet child, like a freshly plucked flower, will retain for a day or two, under favoring conditions, the beautiful semblance of life; but too soon we are constrained to feel that it is death, and to seek a place where we may hide our dead from our sight. And so we open the earth and say "dust to dust, and ashes to ashes," and then write upon the marble, "Here lies all that was mortal!"

2. Our consciousness says No! By consciousness I mean our sense of existence, our personality, what we call "ourselves." Now when we speak of ourselves, we mean our entire personality, that which lives, and thinks, and speaks; certainly we do not mean parts of ourselves. But our selfhood, or consciousness of personality, is so bound up and identified with our bodies, as to seem that the extinction of the one must involve the extinction of the other.

3. And experience gives the same answer: Of all that we have ever known and loved, that have passed away by death, not one has ever returned. Parents, husbands, wives, and children all sleep the same unbroken slumber. It seemed at first they would return, but intervening months and years have dispelled the illusion, and we have at length been constrained to say with David: "We shall go to them, but they will not return to us."

4. And such is the testimony of all time and all ages. Death has reigned for six thousand years throughout the earth. The history of the race is the history of a universal

mortality; it is but one lengthened funeral dirge. Through all generations the race is seen in solemn procession to the tomb. In all time, from the death of Abel till now, in populous China, in the crowded cities of Europe and America, or in the sparsely settled wilds of the uncivilized part of the globe, death everywhere reigns, and reigns with an inexorable sovereignty and finality.

5. And the halting conclusions of reason lie in the same negative direction. Ask reason, "If a man die, shall he live again?" and what is the answer? As impersonated in the book of Job, the answer is: "Man dieth and wasteth away; yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where is he?" Ask the question of Socrates and Plato. Reason may speculate upon the abstract possibility of immortality, and may marshall the presumptions and probabilities of a life separate from and independent of the body; but reason, after its strongest arguments and conclusions, confesses that it *only* reasons, but does not know—that it barely hopes, but scarcely believes. "I shall soon know," said Socrates, "whether death be an eternal sleep, or a life of immortal bliss among the gods." His most positive conclusions in relation to a life beyond the grave, were all weakened and sicklied by this doubting, skeptical, faithless "if." Could Socrates but have come back to have settled for his disciples the great question about which he speculated with so much earnestness, and beauty, and eloquence!

But he never came back, and Plato had to take up the argument where he had left it, and carry it forward with what power he was able to command. But at best, the conclusions of reason and philosophy, touching the life everlasting, if not non-conclusive, have yet been very unsatisfactory, and men have felt the need of something more decided and positive to confirm their faith and hopes. Even Socrates himself, when pressed with this question, confessed his uncertainty and said: "We must await the advent of some great teacher from heaven to settle the matter by divine revela-

tion." Such is the dark or negative view of this subject. Let us now turn to the positive and brighter side.

What are some of the arguments which answer "Yes; if a man die, he *shall* live again?" The light is all the sweeter for the darkness, and the positive affirmations of truth are the more grateful for the bewilderments and uncertainties of error.

1. First then I observe that the simple *idea* of immortality looks favorably to the positive side of this question, and seems to indicate that another life than the fleeting present may be held in reserve for us. Whence comes this notion or idea of immortality and of another life? It seems to be a part of the human consciousness, a kind of inalienable inheritance with which we are endowed by virtue of our creation, a sort of instinctive conception and conviction of our absolute destiny and dignity. At any rate, wherever man is found, even in the most revolting moral degradation, he is found with this idea of a future state, an existence after death.

Now whence comes this universal susceptibility, if not constitutional and innate, something which springs naturally from our creation? It is admitted that a constitutional capacity indicates a corresponding possibility or end. The eye is fitted for light, the ear for sound, and the foot for locomotion, therefore sight, and hearing, and locomotion belong to us. Fish have a capacity for the sea, and birds for the air. So the idea of immortality, its naked conception, is a strong presumptive attestation of its reality. Indeed, it may be assumed that if immortality had not been the original inheritance of the soul, its conception would not have been a possibility. You cannot carry mind beyond the plane of its capabilities, and this is true of all things. An arch will bear a certain pressure and strain, but not an ounce more. The architect of a bridge will tell you to the fraction of a pound how much it will bear. You can bring the mind of a brute up to a given constitutional plane, but by no possible culture can you get it beyond. You can make him fill out the meas-

ure of his capacity, but nothing more. But the idea of immortality is normal with the human soul, and the argument is that therefore the soul is capable of immortality, or that immortality is its legitimate inheritance.

It seems to me, then, that the simple idea of immortality answers this question positively, and says: "Yes; though a man die, he may live again." The conception proves the possibility.

2. The hopes of humanity look in the same direction.

It will be allowed that the hope of immortality is very congenial, and, as we have said, is with all nations a cherished faith and expectation. True, it is sometimes very crude and depraved. As the appetite of a savage differs from the appetite of a civilized man, but is equally appetite in both, and indicates that the body needs nourishment and material replenishment in some form, so this appetite for immortality, whether with pagan or Christian, indicates that immortality is our normal inheritance. "Labor not," said Christ, "for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life." Hence Addison, true to nature, makes Lato say, wondering over Plato's argument for the immortality of the soul:

> It must be so—Plato, thou reasonest well!
> Else whence this pleasing hope, this fond desire,
> This longing after immortality?
> Or whence this secret dread, and inward horror,
> Of falling into naught? Why shrinks the soul
> Back on herself, and startles at destruction?
> 'Tis the divinity that stirs within us;
> 'Tis heaven itself that points out an hereafter
> And intimates eternity to man.

Nothing is so terrible as the possibility of annihilation—non-existence. The soul shrinks from it and clings to existence as if eternal being were its highest right, the loss of which would be its greatest loss.

3. And therefore, immortality has been the religious faith

of humanity in all time. Religion under every variety of form proves this. Temples, and altars, and sacrifices, and prayers, and praise indicate the confident expectation of another life and of the need of preparation and meetness for the same. Indeed, this strong religious element, this proclivity to worship, this hope, this expectation, this desire, this faith in another life is what separates man widely from the brute creation, and allies him to the skies, and makes him "but a little lower than the angels."

4. I have yet to add to this rapid summary of the argument from natural causes, also this: That the imperfections and judicial inequalities of the present state point to another, where our natures may be perfected, and where wrongs and inequalities may be righted. To every creature is assigned a given probation, longer or shorter, yet adequate to the perfection of its being. Some of the most beautiful insects perfect themselves in a day. They open their golden wings to the light of the morning and fold them with the shades of evening A blade of grass ripens under the summer's sun into the golden wealth of autumn, but it takes thousands of years for the full maturity of some trees to be reached. You do not like to see a tree cut down in the sturdy manhood of its strength. You want it to have a chance to fill out its possibilities of growth. If you were to see a farmer thrust his sickle into a field of half-ripe grain you would think him insane. Children should not be taken from school with their education just begun, or even half-finished. You would cry out at such injustice.

Now the argument is that the present life is not long enough for the intellectual and moral development of the soul. Under the most favored circumstances for rapid growth, and vigorous and fruitful culture, the soul is far from its perfection, from its own ideal of desire, and purpose, and endeavor. Not only in moral and religious, but also in intellectual and scientific research, men of the ripest scholarship and highest attainments are constrained to say: "We have

not yet attained; we are not yet perfect; but—we follow on."

In all the pursuits of life, especially those which involve a lengthened discipline, men are everywhere cut down in the midst of their days, and are constrained to leave their plans, and studies, and works unfinished to others.

Now it would seem that the education of the soul, or the growth of the soul after the longest life had but just begun. Sir Isaac Newton, after his astronomical demonstrations, said, he seemed to himself to know nothing in comparison with what remained to be known, and that he felt, even when following the tracks of worlds, and suns, and systems, but as a little child picking up pebbles upon the shore! Everywhere, no less in science than in religion, men are constrained to say: "We know in part, and we prophesy in part." And so everywhere the soul, under this consciousness of imperfection, stretches itself forward, and lifts itself in desire and hope to the perfect; saying with Paul: "When that which is perfect is come, that which is in part shall be done away." Nature, equally with revelation and providence, and grace, seems to say: "What I do now thou knowest not, but thou shalt know hereafter."

I have not time to dwell upon the argument for another life from the judicial inequalities of the present state of existence. I pass it with the simple remark, that the sufferings of the righteous and the prosperity of the wicked can only be satisfactorily explained on the hypothesis of another state, to which the severe discipline and trial of the present may be preparatory, a state where religious truth and fidelities shall be rewarded, and disobedience find its merited penalties. In no other way can the justice of Providence be vindicated.

5. I come now to the more direct and positive testimony of revelation. To this question: "If a man die, shall he live again?" the Bible answers, "Yes." As soon as sin entered the world and death by sin, came the promise of

life, whispered amid the blighted and fading glories of Eden, "The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head." This, as we now know, engrossed the whole work of redemption, and the overthrow of him who had the power of death. In other words, it was a remission of sin, and of course, a remission of the penalty of sin, which was death; for, as the apostle argues, the sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law, but if the law be satisfied and sin be pardoned, then death is deprived of its sting. As the poet says:

> If sin be pardoned, I'm secure;
> Death hath no sting besides.

The sting removed, death ceases to be a curse and becomes a grace and a blessing; and, therefore in the New Testament, death is always spoken of under the sweet and gentle symbols of a sleep to be followed by an awakening to everlasting life. Suppose a man be unjustly imprisoned, but at length his innocence appears and his righteousness comes forth as the noonday, and justice discharges and sets him free. It is in this way that grace changes the death penalty of sin into a positive victory for life and immortality. It was to illustrate and confirm this hope of the resurrection that Enoch was "not, for God took him." In this faith of the resurrection of the dead, Abraham, when he had offered up Isaac, accounted that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead, from whence also he received him in a figure." To the same end God revealed himself to Moses, saying: "I *am* the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." Not, I *was* the God of Abraham historically, but as Christ explained it, intensely in the present; and, therefore, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob must be living, for Christ says: "I am not the God of the dead, but of the *living*." It was the faith of the resurrection that enabled Job to say with so much confidence: "I know that my Redeemer liveth." It was this faith of the resurrection that taught David to say of his child: "I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me." It was through this faith that the prophet, looking on to the resurrection,

said: "Thy dead men shall live again, together with my dead body shall they rise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust, for the earth shall cast out her dead." And so the angel testified to Daniel: "Many that sleep in the dust shall awake and come forth; some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." And Christ, in answer to the cavilling of the Sadducees, said: "Ye do err, not understanding the scriptures. For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven."

"If a man die, shall he live again?" and all these Scriptures say "Yes!" Moses and Elias upon the holy mountain, thousands of years after their departure from the earth, conversing with Christ about his decease, say "Yes." The raising of the young man at Nain; the recalling of the spirit of the young daughter of the ruler; and the resurrection of Lazarus at Bethany, all confirmed the claim of Christ that he was the resurrection and the life, and assert that, "though a man die, he *shall* live again."

But the crowning proof is the resurrection of Christ himself. He had said, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. Then, said the Jews, forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days. But he spake of the temple of his body."

He early showed his disciples that the Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders and chief priest and scribes, and be slain and be raised the third day. All of which came to pass; and upon this simple fact the apostles rest not only the question of immortality, but the truth of the gospel itself and the whole question of salvation. "If the dead rise not Christ is not risen, and if Christ be not risen your faith is vain, and we are found false witnesses. For we have testified of God that he raised up Christ whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not." But the apostle says, this cannot be: "Now *is* Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. For,

since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."

"If a man die, shall he live again?" The resurrection of Christ, with its infallible proofs, seen forty days alive, seen of five hundred at once, and seen as he ascended into heaven, whence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead, all these answer the question positively. Though a man die, he *shall* live again. "For if we believe," says Paul, "that if Jesus died and rose again, even so them also who sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. Wherefore, comfort one another with these words."

But the world does not know how to receive this doctrine. It is unphilosophical and unscientific as they insist. It is the great stumbling block of worldly wisdom; even the faith of the church is halting, and dubious, and exceptional. It is with many a historical faith, a faith of the creed rather than of the heart. The old question is still in debate: "How are the dead raised up, and with what body do they come." But the faith of the early church was decided, and positive, and intense. "Why should it be thought a thing incredible that God should should raise the dead?" said Paul to Agrippa, "touching the hope of the resurrection I am called in question this day." For the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain. In the Catacombs, under Rome, are found the tombs of the early Christians, and the inscriptions are all vital and fragrant with the hope of the resurrection. Such an one "sleeps in Christ—rests in peace till the resurrection." A little child is "borne away on the wings of angels."

Is the hope of the resurrection yours? I do not ask if it is your traditional belief, your speculative faith, nor simply a refuge to which you turn in times of sorrow. But is the hope of the resurrection your confidence and trust. Can you say with the Psalmist, "As for me I shall behold his face in righteousness, I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy

likeness." Can you say with Paul, "Our conversation is in heaven, from whence we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ."

Are you "looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour, Jesus Christ." If this be a personal faith and a confident trust it shall give you a victory over the world, and bring you triumphant peace in the swellings of Jordan."

TAKE HEED HOW YE HEAR.

Luke 8 : 18.

In this passage the Saviour admonishes us that very much depends upon the manner in which we hear the word of God. In truth every deed is right or wrong according to its manner, or spirit, or nature, or intention. It is not enough that we obey the letter: we must yield the obedience of a right spirit. "He is not a Jew who is one outwardly; but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; whose praise is not of men, but of God."

This is the meaning of the text. It is not enough that we hear; we must take heed that we *hear aright.*

Let us consider what is implied in this. As a matter of fact, there is not a little unprofitable hearing of the word of God. Paul complained that the Hebrews were "dull of hearing"; and Christ had occasion frequently to say reprovingly to his disciples, "Are ye yet without understanding?" "How is it that ye do not understand?" "Art thou a master in Israel, and knowest not these things?" Alas! it is still true that "the word preached does not profit, not being mixed with faith."

Let us notice some of those things which vitiate our hearing of the word of God; and some things essential to a right hearing of it.

1. Many hear *from accident.* They have no settled purpose or habit in the matter. If perfectly convenient, or in society favoring an attendance upon worship, they go to the house of God; but if otherwise, they do not go.

Now it is barely possible that this accidental hearing may result in good. Sometimes a person, from sheer desperation, has strayed to the sanctuary and has found a blessing there; the word of God has taken effect; led the person to a knowledge of himself and to the faith and love of Jesus; but it was prayer from some humble heart that sanctified it to this end, and made it "the power of God unto salvation."

2. Others come from simple *custom;* mere habit; the bare force of education. They go to church on the Sabbath as they go to the shop on the week-day evenings; to help fill out the Sabbath and *make it tolerable.* If it were the custom to go to the races on the Sabbath, as in France, they would as easily conform to that.

Now it is well when custom happens to be right; but when you hear only from custom, your profiting will be in the line of custom, and you will have to be satisfied with custom as your reward.

3. Others hear *occasionally;* by spasms, fits, starts. Their consciences get galvanized by some affliction perhaps into a little sensibility, and so they attend church a few Sabbaths, and then fall off for months together.

This is a bad sign. As soon as the spasm in the conscience is past, and the sting and smart of the chastisement is over, they go back into their old indifference and neglect.

4. Some hear from *curiosity.* If there is anything that appeals to the love of novelty, anything singular or eccentric in the manner of the speaker, you will always see this wonder-seeking element in the church. Multitudes followed Lorenzo Dow simply to see his *long beard* (more a novelty then than now), and to witness his oddities.

Some ministers cultivate singularity, and use coarse and vulgar phrases, to attract attention; as if to gather a crowd

were the final object of preaching. If you look into the Saturday papers of some of the cities, you will see pulpit advertisements of this sensational type, appealing to this low and depraved curiosity.

Many people have what the apostle calls "itching ears"; and the minister who has most ability to meet this disease will gather the greatest crowd. Multitudes go to Plymouth Church in Brooklyn, just for the sparkling wit with which Mr. Beecher seasons and lightens his discourses.

I do not speak against vivacity, and pointed, pinching illustrations in the pulpit. But when people only go to church to be made to laugh, they will get little profit, and could be much better "exercised" and "edified" by the "Christie minstrels."

5. Some people go to church merely for *pleasure.* It is a kind of sacred pastime; the church a pleasure place to while away an hour and fifteen minutes. If the preacher be strong and intellectual, a class will go to church with the same relish with which they go to the "lecture"; the less religion and the more science and philosophy, the better for their purpose.

I knew a young minister who drew around him so much of this material that the church came very nigh being swallowed up with it. Everybody liked him: Spiritualists, Swedenborgians, Unitarians, Universalists, and Infidels. O, he was "such a splendid man." And everybody was "pleased and edified," save the more evangelical and spiritual part of the church; they were famished, and mourned and wept.

6. In many cases *prejudice* prevents a profitable hearing of the gospel. You have a little dislike to the preacher, and so nothing he may say, however good or true, does you any good. You think him "proud," or "aristocratic," or "unsocial"; you see a "mote" here and a "beam" there, and so you close your ears.

Even Nathanael said: "Can any good come out of Nazareth?" And the Jews said, "Can a prophet come out of Galilee?"

Nothing is more unjust than prejudice. It is literally "prejudging." You make up your verdict upon suspicions or impressions or dislikes. Would you like to be disposed of in that way? "Judge not, that ye be not judged." It is sad that the truth should be rifled of its effect, or lose its sanctifying power through prejudice. But how often is this the case.

"We saw one casting out devils in thy name, and we (prejudged the case and) forbade him." But Christ said, you did a very wrong thing; "forbid him not." "To his own master he standeth or falleth." "Judge nothing before the time"; "the Lord is at hand."

7. Then we have a class of *captious, critical hearers*, who do not get much profit from what they hear. They regard themselves as standards of orthodoxy, propriety, and fitness, and they measure every man and sermon *by their rule*.

Some men think the gospel never preached unless the "five points of Calvinism" are distinctly enunciated; others think the gospel not preached unless the whole code of morals is insisted on. One man thinks *baptism* should be put in every sermon. A high churchman wants endless changes rung on *the church*. A Sabbatarian wants similar prominence given to the Sabbath.

A large class of men constitutionally are given to "hobbies," and they are never edified unless their favorite hobby is presented. If it is not, they become censorious and fault-finding, and sit in judgment upon "the word of the Lord."

8. But the most serious difficulty remains to be noticed; and it is one which indicts by far the largest class of hearers. I mean *indifference;* not inattention; not listlessness. I do not think inattention very common. The evil of which I speak is deeper than this. It is indifference of heart to things heard with respectful attention and intelligent interest.

You appreciate the sermon; are interested in the sermon, and commend the sermon; but you do not so *feel* the sermon

as to be constrained to "give to it the more earnest heed." This is the popular defect of our hearing—"*indifference.*"

Your physician leaves you medicine. He calls next day and inquires after it. "O," you say, "it was good, admirable." "Well," he says, "how has it affected you?" "*O, not at all.*" He would certainly conclude some defect in the prescription, or that you were in a bad way. So with this passive state of feeling under the faithful ministrations of the word of God.

It is terrible when men can hear the fearful or joyful truths of the gospel with attention and interest, and yet with the most utter indifference and unconcern. Yes, unconcern; that is the exact word.

A sermon ought to work in a man's conscience like a medical irritant in the body. Or, if in a healthy state spiritually, it ought to nourish and quicken like food, and stimulate to all holy activities and charities.

Unconcern! That is the great sin against the gospel. We hear it as though it did not concern us.

How pertinent the admonition. "Take heed how ye hear." And now, what is the positive side of this subject?

1. First of all, we should hear the gospel as *the word of God.* Paul says the Thessalonians "received the gospel not as the word of man, but as it was in deed and in truth, the word of God." They received Paul as a messenger of God; as speaking for God; as coming in his name and by his authority. In other words, they acknowledged his apostleship. The ministry comes with the same authority. The gospel is no less the word of God now than then. When the old prophets came to the people, they said, boldly: "Hear the word of the Lord." And on this ground the gospel still claims to be heard with reverence. This is the first element of all right hearing.

"God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of his saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are round about him." "I will hear what God the Lord will speak."

Suppose each hearer were to come in this way—to hear what God will say. "One thing have I desired of the Lord." What is it, David? "That I may dwell in the house of the Lord forever." Is that all? "No, that I may behold the beauty of the Lord, and inquire in his temple."

Where there is not that deep-toned reverence for God and for the institutions of his worship and the ministrations of his word, there can be no right hearing. It is only as men hear God in his sanctuary that they worship.

2. Another thing essential to a right hearing is *humility;* meekness, docility, teachableness. Some are too wise to be taught. In religious matters the heart is naturally wise in its own folly, and strong in its weakness. "There is a generation," Solomon says, "wise in their own eyes." And it has not passed away from the earth.

When the friends of Job attempted to explain to him the cause of his afflictions, and sharpened their words of reproof against him, adding bitterness to his sorrow, Job replied in severe but merited irony, "Doubtless you are the people, and wisdom will die with you." "You assume to know all about God and his ways; but I have some knowledge as well as you."

This dogmatical spirit is very hostile to the gospel. It is, therefore, we are exhorted to "lay aside all malice and guile and hypocrisies and evil speakings, and with meekness to receive the engrafted word." Hence, James says: "Be not many masters" (teachers). "Be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath"; not backward to speak, but humble, modest, gentle, persuasive in your speech.

The Saviour enforced this same humility when he took a little child and set him in the midst, and said to James and Peter and John, who had fallen into a debate as to who should be the greatest: "Verily I say unto you, except a man receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall in no case enter therein." You must be docile, teachable, learners rather than masters, and disciples rather than doc-

tors. "For one is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren."

3. Another thing. Hear with *self-application;* for self-improvement. A minister went to his church on a stormy morning, and found but one man present. But he went through the services and preached the sermon just as if the usual congregation had been there. Before he could get down from the pulpit, his one hearer was gone, and he could not discover who he was. But some years after, in a distant locality, a stranger accosted him and asked if he remembered that stormy Sabbath when he preached to one man. He replied that he did, very well. "Well," said he, "so do I, and shall have occasion to bless God for it forever. I was your one hearer that day, and the sermon sent an arrow to my heart, that constrained me to fly to Christ for refuge. Every word of that sermon went to my heart, and said to me, *thou art the man.*"

The truth was, he could not give the sermon away; could not hear for others; was constrained to hear for himself. But a great many hear for their neighbors; pass off parts of the sermon on the right hand and left; front and rear; now to this pew; now to that; and now to the pews that are empty, regretting that the holders are not there to take their portion. But every sermon is as really addressed to you alone, as though there were not another person in the house.

In a gold mine each man strives to get as many ounces as he can. In the scramble for wealth, no one feels he has any thing for his neighbor. He says, this is my good fortune, and I will make the most of it. O, if men would but heed the word of God in this way.

Law and medical students carefully note down the lectures of the course for reference and use. Suppose you were to hear the gospel in this way; make it a point to see how much good you could get out of every sermon you hear! You would have a treasure at the year's end worth more than gold that perisheth.

A rich man a short time since showed me a ten thousand dollar United States bond. "There," said he, "do you not wish your people would make you a present of that?" I said: "Yes, sir; for it would do them good to give it. But," I said, "there is one thing I would prefer from my people, even to that ten thousand dollar United States bond; and that is, a prayerful and practical acknowledgment of every sermon I preach; so that I shall not be constrained to feel I have labored in vain, and spent my strength for naught."

4. Finally: We must hear *to obey and do* the word of God. "Blessed," said one to Christ, "is the womb that bare thee, and the paps that thou hast sucked." "Rather," said Christ, "blessed are they that hear the word of God and keep it." "Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you." "Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only." "He that heareth my words and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me." "He that doeth righteousness is righteous." "If any man hear these sayings of mine and doeth them, he is like a man that builded his house upon a rock."

It is time to close. "Whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty and continueth therein, not being a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deeds."

Take heed how ye hear. God says to us: "Incline your ear unto me, hear and your soul shall live." "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city."

XX.

A LECTURE.

THE DIGNITY OF LABOR.

Delivered before the Mechanics' and Workingmen's Literary Association, of Stonington, Conn., March 20, 1846.

Labor implies employment, toil, whether of body or mind. It is the opposite of idleness, indolence, sloth. We shall contemplate it, at this time, in its physical relations, as seen in the employment of the hands, and the various energies of the body.

We do so, first, because this view is most in harmony with the character of this association ; and secondly, because there are reasons why labor, physical labor, should be placed before the public mind, in its legitimate relations and true dignity.

The most important of these reasons, is, that labor, save in its mechanical character, is but little understood, and still less appreciated. Comparatively few, it is believed, would submit to it, but for imperious personal and social claims, which labor alone can meet. They regard the working life as their fate—as a sort of vassalage into which they have unfortunately been thrown, and from which, in the present arrangement of society, there can be no deliverance, save in the attainment of a fortune which shall raise them above the necessity of toil. Hence the struggle for wealth. Hence the morbid sensibility, which at the present period is mani-

festing itself in various schemes for the dissolution and reorganization of society. But so far from sympathizing with this *sentimentality*, we believe it to be well that the cast off society is such, in its social relations and claims, as to *secure* a healthful amount of physical exertion from the great mass of community.

While it is admitted that in individual cases, and perhaps of some entire classes, there is demanded an excess of toil, still these cases are comparatively few, and by no means counterbalance the immense good accruing to the many from vigorous labor.

That society in its civil relations might be more favorable to labor—that labor might be more abundantly available—is doubtless true; but this is to be secured, not so much by any change in our social or civil condition, as by restoring labor to that elevated rank and dignity, so evidently assigned it by the Creator. Here as elsewhere, the cause of disease and derangement, which may at any time appear upon the surface of society, is to be sought and found, not upon the surface itself—not in associational or civil legislation abstractly—but in a violation of one or more of the elementary laws of our being. There are certain constitutional laws, which in proportion as they are violated in the *individual*, the whole body politic becomes diseased and deranged. Take for illustration the now well-established fact that vaccination is a preventative to *that scourge of the race*. This is a most benevolent arrangement. But let it be violated, from ignorance or any other cause, by *individuals*, and in proportion to the extent of such a violation must *society* suffer. So with the evil of intemperance. Philanthropists sought in vain to stay the torrent, till they returned to nature's simple law—that poison is never necessary to a man in health—and began to persuade the world to act upon nature's teachings. So of medical science and practice—that man is the best practitioner who most successfully aids nature in throwing off disease. And so with equal

truth, that man is the greatest philanthropist, who in his sympathy for his race, and in his exertions to ameliorate their condition, follows most carefully the elementary laws of the human constitution. If these are violated, however beautiful may be the *theory* of improvement—however inviting and smiling its scenery, as touched by the pencil of a warm and generous imagination—yet, when practically tested, when reduced to real life, when it comes in to satisfy the cravings of humanity, it will be found much to resemble in its results those pictured towns and cities of the far West, which, though beautiful on paper when fresh from the hands of a New York artist, seldom fail to be associated in the end with disappointment, bankruptcy, and suffering.

The truth is, as he is the best Christian who with the simplicity of a child sits at the feet of the Son of God to receive *religious* truth, so that man is the wisest who, touching his *physical* and *social* wants, regards most attentively the voice of nature—treasures up her instructions, and blesses himself and the world by practicing the same.

Guided by this principle, we proceed to show that labor is a law of our being.

Whether we regard the destructions of the physical economy, or the collateral teachings of revelation, nothing can be more evident than that employment is the appropriate inheritance of man. Even in a state of innocence, it was his delightful work to have care of the trees of Paradise, and give names to the various animals by which he found himself surrounded.

Now, however lightly some may regard these beautiful intimations of the original employment of man, to *others* they are deeply interesting, since they are strictly in harmony with what are known to be the laws of our physical organization, and clearly indicate that peculiar kind of labor, which in connection with obedience to *moral law* and religious truth, is destined to work out both the material and

spiritual renovation of the world—to make the desert bloom again like Eden, and the wilderness blossom like the garden of God.

We repeat it—Man's divinely appointed work, whether as indicated by natural or revealed truth, is the tilling of the earth for the support of himself and those domestic animals which Providence has committed equally to his care and use.

Let us not be understood as intimating that the various arts are not in themselves legitimate and valuable—that trade, commerce, and the professions, are necessarily violations of the laws of nature—that the mechanic, the lawyer, the physician, the clergyman, are not doing the work assigned them by their peculiar bodily or mental structure, or by the higher designation of religion itself. We only claim that the tilling of the earth is emphatically the work of *man* —the great staple employment of the human family, and that the various arts and professions are but exceptions to the general law, and should hence be regarded as subordinate to what, from causes beyond our control, must come more and more to be the exclusive business of the great mass of mankind.

It is, however, very obvious that these exceptions to the law of agricultural labor, have been multiplied to a dangerous extent. Here, as in the moral economy, there is a strong propensity in man to violate the laws of God. For the happy, healthful employment assigned him of heaven he is dispossd to substitute one of his own choosing ; and the choice is often made without any peculiar indication of genius, and in violation of the laws of physical and mental adaptation. The consequence is, that while the field has been deserted, the use of the plough and hoe abandoned, the mechanical, mercantile, and professional vocations have been overstocked and over-run with a horde of unskillful, inefficient, poverty-stricken, half-starved incumbents. Men who in the cultivation of the soil would have labored ad-

vantageously to themselves and families, by seeking some other calling, to which they were wholly unfitted, have been able only to meet their immediate passing wants, leaving to their sons as their only inheritance a "trade," to which perhaps they are as little fitted, and still less inclined than their fathers.

Many a man may be seen awkwardly attempting to smooth boards, and vainly attempting to make the crooked edges straight, who would have handled skillfully the various implements of husbandry, and worked with decided profit in that noblest of all employments—the producing of something from the earth.

The same remarks are applicable to the professions. Law and medicine are everywhere overstocked—that is to say, there are more lawyers and physicians than both the real and imaginary wants of the people demand. Great numbers of professional men are wholly unfitted for their work, either by natural or acquired abilities, and if employed at all are employed to the great detriment of the people, and to the neglect and discouragement of native genius and true professional worth. Hence originates empyricism, in all its various forms. Men commit themselves to a profession; but finding themselves wanting in talent and skill adequate to a successful pursuit of it, turn to what in a majority of cases seems to be more in harmony with their peculiar moral organism, and, vulture-like, literally prey upon the very vitals of their fellow-beings. Hence the quackery with which the world is filled. Patent medicines, composed of what ingredients it is presumed the inventor knows as little as he cares, are not only retailed in phials and bottles, but wholesaled in casks, boxes, and cargoes; enough almost, it would seem, of these noxious drugs are annually poured down the throats of the people, both to freight and float the American navy.

In this way valuable talents and solid acquirements have been often discouraged and driven from their appropriate field

of labor, to make room for a class of unprincipled demagogues, who are too lazy to work or learn, and skillful only in deception, fraud, and crime.

It might seem that this matter would regulate itself, and that professional intelligence might stand in successful competition with ignorance and knavery; and so it would, if talent and worth did not need to be fed and clothed. But the highest degree of professional ability are not unfrequently found associated with the deepest poverty, and cannot afford to wait the slow but certain issues of experience, and from necessity must often turn to other employments for sustenance. Then add to this, that the people not only love to be bumbugged, but are even willing to pay a good price for it, together with the strange credulity with which they are accustomed to receive whatever is new, and we have the secret of that ephemeral success which greets the claims of these false apostles, whether of medicine, religion, or law. The same remarks are true in relation to the arts. We have bungling artists of every grade, from the man who botches together a shoe, up to the worst of all impositions in the arts—that of daubing, instead of painting the human face.

But these evils will be corrected. The onward, and at the present time, rapid march of science, will drive out from the arts and professions this worthless clan of speculators, and hasten the day when the law of the gospel shall be literally and rigidly enforced—that, "He who will not work, neither shall he eat." The invention of labor-saving machines inevitably tends to this result. If these are multiplied for a quarter of a century to come, as they have been for half of a century past, there will be left little to be done by the hands of operatives. With the oversight of a few skilled artists, machinery will soon do what the great body of mechanics are now doing; and consequently many of them must seek some other employment. The power of invention, which has wrought so entire a revolution in the manufacture

of cloths, is invading every other branch of mechanical industry, and must, in the course of a few years, work similar results. To whatever department of labor machinery is applied, it must furnish facilities with which the hands of a man will not be able to compete. Incredulity itself has ceased to fix bounds to the inventive power of the human mind. It will never pause in its work of discovery, until the laws of nature, in their efficiency for the necessities and conveniences of life have been thoroughly investigated. And in proportion as these are brought to light and applied, will the demand for the physical agency be diminished. The same is true, to a somewhat less extent perhaps, of the professions. Medicine, at least in the department of therapeutics, is constantly verging toward a practical simplicity, that will at length become a thorough remedy for quackery, as well as for that multitude of embryo practitioners who now subsist on the imaginary ills of the people. As light advances and people begin to understand that health is not a matter of chance, but the result of obedience to established laws, and that disease, at least in its incipient stages, is most effectually remedied by a regard to the spontaneous suggestions of nature, the demand for professional aid will come to be proportionately less, and the practice at length confined to its appropriate sphere of disease in its more complicated forms. The time is not far distant, and may it speedily come, when only those men will be wanted as physicians, who are worthy of the confidence of the people. The remainder, and it will not be small, will be compelled to seek employment somewhere else.*

* This is illustrated by the well-known fact, that while people in chronic complaints, which are not immediately threatening, can afford to tamper with quacks and nostrums, as soon as they are really sick, and begin to feel the gripings of disease, they seek for help from another quarter. The path of interest, therefore, as well as duty, on the part of well-informed physicians, is to rebuke the imaginary ills of the people, and to shed upon society the light of truth in relation to everything pertaining to this most important department of professional labor.

The same will be true in relation to clergymen. In religion, no less than in other things, the time has already come when a man cannot make a profession a vehicle to honor, wealth, or even employment, while wanting in talent to sustain its responsibilities. The church needs ministers, that is, men that can and will serve her, and not a class of men who, in virtue of their professional rank and standing, demand, as a homage to their ordinational investments, that they should be "ministered unto." Cases are yearly occurring, of persons retiring from the ministry, because, evidently, the church can well afford to spare them.

We have pursued this thought somewhat at length, in order to show that the tendency of things on every hand is to force men back to what we believe emphatically to be the great and noble work of man, that of cultivating the earth. Men must have employment, and God in his providences is hastening on the time when the primitive order of things shall be restored, and man shall bring up from the soil his bread with the sweat of his brow.

The same inevitable tendencies are to be seen in every kind of enterprise—in commerce and national interchanges, as well as in mechanical industry and manufactures. Science, in its universal diffusion, is everywhere prostrating monopolies; controlling by an irresistible power the movement of nations; shaping and harmonizing their policy, in despite of themselves, with the truest interest and highest hopes of the race as indicated in the purposes and promises of the gospel. Like the sun in the firmament, science will ere long shed its light upon all, in procuring liberally the blessings and comforts of life. Its necessary, and we may add, gracious tendency, is so to reduce the cost of the manufacture of the raw article as to place it, when manufactured, within the reach of all, and thus to transfer the chief value to the article in its crude state; for in proportion as the use of an article is increased by the cheapness of its manufacture, will be the demand for it in its raw state at the hands of the producer.

When, therefore, machinery shall have been brought to that perfection, where but comparatively few will be needed to oversee its movements, there still will be left for the laborer *one* resource, and so far as we can now see, *only one*—the cultivation of the earth. Here is a field which science never will invade, save as the servant of the laborer. Although the manufacture of an article after it has been produced from the earth may be almost indefinitely hastened, there is no cause to fear that means will ever be discovered by which a bushel of grain will be produced in a less number of days, weeks, or months, than it now is. The laws of production, whether in the vegetable or animal kingdom, are fixed laws, and doubtless in harmony with all the higher and undeveloped principles and powers of nature. The present periods of productive increase must continue unchanged. As there has been, so there will continue to be, a time to sow and a time to reap, a time to scatter and a time to gather, with the need of intermediate culture. Experience has already shown that he who in agriculture attempts to hasten the established process of nature, does so at the forfeiture of the reward of his labor; for the earth, as if indignant at the insult, will not yield its increase.

Science will doubtless, more and more, contribute her aid in the preparing and dressing of the earth, in the cultivating and enriching of its soils, and preparing of its production for consumption; but, after all, the husbandman must patiently wait nature's steady and comparatively tardy changes, and with assiduous care, and to a certain extent, with laborious toil and a helping hand, if he would hope to receive her blessings in the golden fruits of a luxuriant harvest. Here, then, is an asylum for the laborer—a temple from whose shrines the progress of science will never force him. Because the earth, with its hills, valleys, and plains, is nature's own kingdom, where her laws are absolute and unconflicting. If science enters here, she will come to aid the laborer, to cheer him in his toil, to render the earth more fruitful, to furnish

him with wealth, leisure, and relaxation for the improvement of his mind and cultivation of his heart.

This will be more clearly seen, by regarding labor in its relations to civil economy.

The true wealth of a nation consists primarily in its soils, and secondarily in the cultivation of its soils. All other wealth is artificial, and the result of conventional policy. Mines and manufactures, in their relation to the established habits and usages of society, are valuable; but gold, silver, and copper, with the finest of cotton, linen, and woolen fabrics, would in themselves furnish but a poor repast to a man perishing with hunger. Valuable as these things now are in their artificial connection with society, available as they may now be in procuring by exchange the productions of the earth for the support of the body, yet when reduced to their inherent value, they are of but very little importance. This is seen in cases of famine; especially in besieged cities, where the prince no less than the slave, and the man of millions no less than the beggar, must perish from actual starvation. The man, in such a case, with a barrel of meal, or a hundred pounds of meat, is richer by far than the man of princely fortune, who literally starves amidst his heaps of worthless coin. Here the impotency of this *artificial wealth* is seen and felt. A cup of milk, a pound of bread, is worth more in these circumstances than pounds of the purest gold.

The soil, then, as associated with productive labor, is the foundation of social and national prosperity. Man needs first to be fed. The body must be replenished with proper aliment. Food and drink are the primary wants of man. He can accommodate himself to the severities of climate, to the winds and snows and frosts of winter, or to the burning rays and scorching heat of a tropical sun; but in no clime can he conveniently accommodate himself to hunger and thirst. He can dispense with houses, furniture, luxuries, and all the artificial adjuncts of social and domestic life, but

cannot well dispense with wheat, rye, Indian corn, and potatoes.

Let us not be understood as undervaluing the present arrangement of society, nor as denying the utility of the improvements which are so rapidly multiplying around us. Their value, however, is relative, not inherent; but based upon the productions of the soil. Hence the important relation which labor—*the working of the soil*—holds to political economy. That kind of labor is evidently of the first importance, which anticipates the first and most general wants of the individual—the race. Artificial wants can never arise till natural wants are supplied. But when these are met, there is left room for the indulgence of an innocent, rational, and useful taste, in the arrangement of the circumstances of the individual, and of society. Here, the arts, mechanical labor and commercial changes, take their rise and find their true value. The cultivator of the soil erects a house, or what is the same thing, employs a mechanic to do it, and in exchange gives him the surplus produce of the earth. In other words, he feeds the mechanic and his family, not only for the present, while in his immediate service, but by a duly graduated compensation, for the future. But let it be remembered that if the earth had not been first tilled and made productive, the house could not have been built, and the mechanic could not have been employed. What is thus true of the individual must be true of society.

Hence, if it would be a wretched policy for a man to employ his time in the manufacture of fabrics wherewith to adorn his person, or of costly furniture wherewith to fill his house, while himself and family were perishing by gradual but certain starvation, it is surely a policy no less wretched, for a government to employ the energies of a people in the manufacturing of the luxuries and superfluities of life, while they are perishing because the simplest wants of nature are not more than half satisfied.

A sound national policy, therefore, will regard the culti-

vation of the earth as the basis of its prosperity, and seek to furnish encouragement and protection to mechanical and manufacturing industry in the increasing productive wealth of its soil.

We speak of a national in distinction from a governmental policy. Rulers and governments may become rich by enormous taxations, and other outrages upon the rights of the governed; but the increase of a revenue beyond the actual wants of the government, whether by means direct or indirect, is but so much unjustly wrested from the individual, and but another name for robbery and plunder.

England is said to be a rich and powerful nation. But her wealth, from necessity perhaps, on account of the scantiness of her soil, has been the wealth of manufacturing, and not of producing.* She has lived and grown rich upon the *artificial*, and not upon the real wants of the race. And what is the result? Let the world mark it and receive instruction. With an agricultural basisin no way proportionable to her manufacturing interests, the result is that one-half of her population are to-day perishing with hunger, in a condition of social wretchedness unparalleled in the records of civilization. And all this the result of a policy which has sought the elevation of the few at the expense of the many—the resources of wealth and power in the unrequited tōils of her poverty stricken and half-starved children. Making the world the market for her fabrics, and shutting her ports against the productions of other countries, she reduced her laboring classes to the lowest extremes of poverty.

But a brighter day is dawning upon England, and through her upon the world.† Compelled, at length, by the stern

* Many are of the opinion that the manufacturing interest has already been carried too far; but as an affair of practical business. we all know that it passes the power of conventional policy to arrest its growth.—*Spectator.*

† Sir Robert Peel's position is one of proud, but terrible responsibility. The value of a perfectly free trade *in provisions*, is beginning to present

necessities of her condition to change her policy, she seems about to adopt one more in harmony with justice and the interests of the race. Having pursued her system of exclusiveness and governmental elevation to the extreme of its practical workings, and found it fraught with immense evil, she turns to the only remedy, and permits the producing nations around her to come in and feed her starving population. As she has made the world the market for her manufactures, so she is constrained to offer herself to the world as the market of its agricultural productions. Had she adopted this policy years since, her poor to-day, instead of perishing for bread, would be in a comparatively thriving condition; blessed, not barely with the necessities, but with many of the comforts and conveniences of life.

It seemed necessary to say thus much upon this subject to illustrate the relation of labor to social and civil economy. And in the light of these facts we ask, where are the sources of social prosperity—of national wealth? Where but among the hills, and valleys, and plains, and meadows, and forests, of our wide-spread country, as they are subjected to the active, productive industry of the laboring classes?* The man who produces from the earth a bushel of grain, whether for his own or another's consumption, contributes so much toward the national wealth; and every additional bushel produced, goes to make up that aggregate of productive capital upon which an extended manufacturing and commercial interest can alone safely be based.

If the views presented be correct, then in political economy,

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itself to the nation in its real character and dimensions. It is not by giving a monopoly in our *food market* to the landholders of these little islands, that agricultural pursuits are to be maintained in their natural and healthy proportions.—*Spectator.*

* As you reduce labor, you reduce the national wealth, which is the sum of your productive industry. Who can estimate the value of national labor? A poor man's labor is his capital. If he earns $120 per annum, that is equal to a capital of $2,000 at 6 per cent.—*Stewart's Speech.*

labor, in its relation to the soil, occupies a place of primary rank and dignity; secondary to this is mechanical industry and skill; and then commercial enterprise in all its various forms and modifications. Between these several branches of industrial pursuit there need be no controversy.* When rightly viewed they are but a fraternity of interests which, by a kindly intercourse and reciprocal exchange, may powerfully aid each other. Least of all should mechanical industry assume an attitude of hostility to the agricultural. Nor let the farmer be alarmed at the progress of the manufacturing interest, since it opens to him a market for the products of the soil, and in exchange lays at his feet the conveniences of life.† And here is seen what will come more and more to be realized in this country—the high and dignified independence of productive labor. Science on the one hand, will so lighten the task of the laborer that there shall be no need of excessive toil, and on the other hand, so reduce the cost of manufacturing, that the elegancies even of civilized life, in ample proportion, shall be within his reach. So, equally elevated above the pressure of want and the need of exhausting labor, with the improvements of society at his command, the man who possesses and cultivates from one to one hundred acres of land will be of all men the most independent, and may be of all men the most happy.

It is time to pass to another view of this subject. The moral influence of labor is so obvious as scarcely to need illustration. A neighborhood, a state, a nation, released from the claims of labor, without special restraining influences, would soon fall into decay from the demoralizing

* Habent quoddam commune vinculum, et quasi cognatione quadam inter se continenter.

† By increasing manufacturing establishments, you increase the demand for agricultural produce, and of course increase its price; and on the other hand, by increasing the supply of manufactured goods, you so reduce their price, that the farmer is enabled to sell for more and buy for less.—*Stewart's Speech.*

power of indolence. Here is one of the great personal, social, and national dangers of wealth. Wealth places a man above the actual necessity of toil, and thence induces habits of dissipation, extravagance, and luxury; or, if it does not result in these extremes, it seldom fails to induce a mental dissipation, scarcely less depraved in its character, and scarcely less hostile to our social and moral interests. If labor is evidently a law of nature, based upon the wants of our physical organism, essential to its healthy and perfect development, so it is equally a law of God, essential in no small degree to the healthful and perfect development of man's moral constitution.

The same law which sanctifies rest—cessation from work one day in seven—clearly recognizes labor as the general law of man, to which the Sabbath forms an exception. It takes for granted that every man will have daily employment. It is not occasional labor which the Bible recognizes, or which the laws of the physical constitution demand; but daily, vigorous exercise as essential to a sound mind in a sound body. In the light of religious truth, an idle man cannot be a moral man; much less, a Christian. Solomon, whose wise and weighty sayings, upon this as well as upon many other subjects of moral bearing and practical importance we should do well often to consult, speaks thus: "I went by the field of the slothful, and the vineyard of the man void of understanding; and lo! it was all grown over with thorns, and nettles covered the face of it, and the stone wall thereof was broken down. Then I saw and considered it well; I looked upon it and received instruction. Yet a little sleep, yet a little slumber, yet a little folding of the hands to sleep." Such is the spirit of indolence. What is its reward? "So shall thy poverty come upon thee as one that travaileth, and thy want as an armed man." What a truthful description, both of the character and consequences of improvidence, as not unfrequently seen in our own day—our own country—*our own town.* But the fruits of industry are the reverse of this.

The rest of the laboring man is sweet. There is nothing better for a man than that he should make his soul enjoy good in his *labor*. And that a man should *eat* and *drink* of his *own labor*, this is declared to be the gift of God.

If we turn to the New Testament, we shall find the law of labor still more explicitly revealed and authoritatively enforced. Here we are *commanded* to work with our own hands.* This is very specific—to be quiet and do our own business, that we may walk honestly toward them who are without; that is, pay our debts and be above dependence.

Paul declares that while among the Thessalonians he *commanded* that if any man *would* not work, neither should he eat; and then adds: "We hear that there are some among you that walk disorderly." What is the crime? What the Bible, what the morality of the gospel makes as crime—IDLENESS—they worked not at all. What is the apostolic admonition? Hear it: "Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work and eat their own bread." Here is no sickly and vitiated sympathy, either with the spirit or consequences of indolence; but decided, wholesome rebuke. And what is the rule of discipline for this offense? "If any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed." Stringent as the law may seem to be, it was not more so than the case demanded; nor has it, we believe, become so obsolete that its application, with all its stringency, would not work both as a powerful purgative and sanative for many of the disorders with which even Christian communities are often infected.

The want of steady employment is the source of many of

* Not only are we bound by the law of the gospel to employment, but to a *useful* employment—"the thing which is good." We may not, for instance, make or vend ardent spirits, *or in any way implicate our capital therein*. [See an interesting article in the Norwich "Reporter," upon the guilt of renting buildings for the sale of ardent spirits.]

our social and domestic evils. In villages, especially, not a few are in the habit of spending a large portion of their unemployed time in a species of lounging idleness—sitting about in the shops, to the no small annoyance of those who have employment, entertaining themselves and others whom they *can* entertain, with the passing gossip of the day—a truly dignified employment!—one every way worthy of a rational, intelligent Christian mind! For this evil, in its relations to religious society, the discipline of Paul is not too severe. *Where there is no talebearer, strife ceaseth.* One of the old writers quaintly but truly says: "An idle man's head is the devil's workshop.

Go into our larger towns and cities, and trace the history of crime; and in nine cases out of ten you will find it originating in habits of idleness—in an indisposition to labor. And not unfrequently these habits are formed in childhood,* during the years of apprenticeship, or clerkship, in this very practice of lounging away the hours of relaxation from the more immediate duties of their calling. Relaxation from the severities of labor, is doubtless desirable, and if rightly

* "Mothers, if you would train up your children to be useful members of society, keep them from running about the streets. The great school of juvenile vice is the street. There the urchin learns the vulgar oath, or the putrid obscenity. For one lesson at the fireside he has a dozen in the kennel. Thus are scattered the seeds of falsehood, gambling, theft, and violence. Mothers, as you love your own flesh and blood, make your children cling to the hearthstone. Love home yourself; sink the roots deep among your domestic treasures; set an example in this, as in all things, which your offspring may follow. It is a great error that children may be left to run wild in every sort of street temptation for several years, and that it will then be time enough to break them of it. This horrid mistake makes half our spendthrifts, thieves, and drunkards. No man would raise a colt or an ox on such a principle; no man would suffer the weeds to grow in his garden for any length of time, saying he could eradicate them at any time. Look to this matter, parents; see, more especially, that your children are not out at night, loitering around some coffee house. Mothers, make your children love home, and by all means encourage them to love you better than all other human beings."

improved highly beneficial, both to the body and mind; but if time he squandered, *as in many cases it is*, it were far better, both for the individual and society, that he should have constant employment. The majority of laborers would doubtless prefer steady work, if for no other motive than its reward, and if their preference might in any way be gratified, the moral influence would be most happy.* The man who is at his work during the day, and with his family at night, will not be likely to contract habits of profligacy and immorality.

One of the most happy and effective preventatives to many of the lesser crimes, especially those which obtain among the miserably poor, is to furnish them with employment as the means of earning their bread.† The privileges of available labor are seldom found associated with gross immorality. But where the hope of reward is doubtful, or so small as to furnish no excitement to effort, men sink down into a state of reckless indolence, and become the victims of a grovelling sensuality.

The moral influence of labor is happily illustrated in the character of New England as contrasted with some other sections of our country. New England is emphatically the land of toil and laborious industry, Her rock-bound hills,

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* In some of the towns of Massachusetts, where the fisheries are the principal employment during the mild part of the year, the condition of the people has been much improved by the introduction of the manufacture of boots and shoes, thus affording steady employment.

† It is believed that that unfortunate class know as paupers, if regarded with that kindness and encouragement due to humanity, would in a majority of cases contribute not a little to their own comfort and support. The experiment has been made in many towns with decided success. The town farm is the home of the poor—they are made to feel that *it is theirs*. A steward is employed at a *stated salary* to aid them in cultivating it. In this way an interest is awakened, they feel that they have something they still can call their own—the farm and buildings are kept in good repair, and the result is, they sustain themselves. The present way of disposing of them is as inhuman as it is unchristian.

and almost equally rock-bound valleys, have been made productive only by the patient and persevering toil of her own hardy sons. But if she is eminently the land of industry, she is scarcely less so of morality and religion. If energy and strength are distinctive features in her physical development, they are no less so in her mental and moral.

While feebleness, effeminacy, a sickly morality, and at best but a vitiated piety, characterize the whole population of the South, the morality of New England is as fresh and bracing as her mountain airs—strong and impulsive as her mountain torrents.

> Land of the forest and the rock,
> Of dark blue lake and mighty river,
> Of mountains reared aloft to mock
> The storm's career, the lightning's shock,
> Our own green land forever!
> Land of the beautiful and brave!
> The freeman's home, the martyr's grave!
> The nursery of giant men,
> Whose deeds have linked with every glen
> The romance of some warrior's dream.

The same, with some slight shades of difference, is true of Scotland, as well as every other spot where labor has been regarded in its true dignity, or encouraged with its appropriate reward.

Even where slave labor does not exist, as at the West, but where the almost spontaneous productions of the soil renders labor less imperious, the morals of men have been found rapidly to decline. It is a historical fact, that in every age and country the fertile and well-watered places have been the nurseries of luxury and vice, while morality and religion have flourished amid the comparatively barren and mountainous portions of the earth. The reason is, labor is favorable to virtue—indolence to vice. An industrious people cannot be an immoral people, and scarcely irreligious, provided the means of religious culture are afforded them.

Agriculture and mechanical industry, controlled in its spirit by high moral principle and religious faith, furnishes a most interesting illustration of the harmony that will be found everywhere to exist between the physical and moral laws of the universe. Social peace and domestic happiness are the invariable fruits of this divinely appointed union. Personal industry, based upon individual wants and domestic and social obligations—this is the order of nature—this the law of Heaven.

When God created man, he created him an individual, and by a subsequent creation bound him to the family relation. This order will never be revoked. It could not be without annihilating the race. Man's peculiar physical, social, and moral constitution demands it, and bids us beware how we trifle with God's appointments. Associational labor, whatever might be its pecuniary advantages, would be found, according to the system of Fourier, hostile not only to social and moral elevation, but destructive of that individuality of character which it is our dignity to cherish, and of that manly independence which our civil institutions are so well calculated to develop. Its inevitable tendency must be to sink the *individual* in *the community*—to reduce the mass of society to a passive state—if not of physical, yet of mental vassalage. For when a man is not under the necessity of *acting* for himself, he will scarcely take the trouble of *thinking* for himself. The transfer of labor, in its responsibility, from the individual to a constituted agency, would be followed by an effeminacy of character that would sooner or later inevitably subvert our social and religious institutions.

So far from accelerating, it would evidently arrest the march of science and mechanical invention, and draw over the race the darkness of a materialism which never rises above the groveling sentiment—"Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." No; if you would elevate and improve man, you must elevate and improve him in his individual character. If you would strengthen and invigorate that

character, you must throw it upon its *own* resources and task its energies to the utmost. Nothing is needed to secure the advancement of the race but to open the path to elevation, and hold up to view the rewards of exertion and toil. The history and present standing of our own country is a convincing illustration of this.

What have communities done for the improvement of society? What have the Shakers done to elevate the condition of man—if we except the vending of germless garden seeds and the manufacturing of that wonderful triumph of the arts—*corn brooms?* What are the laboring classes among them, but well-fed, coarsely clad, ignorant serfs? Who can suppose that a "a community" could have subjected to its present practical efficiency the power of steam, cutting against wind and tide our rivers, lakes, and oceans, or flying with the swiftness of an eagle over our valleys, hills, and mountains? No! it required individual thought, awakened perhaps by want, and stimulated by the hopes of reward, to bring to light and apply to practical purposes these hidden laws and powers of nature.

But such a system can never prevail to any extent in this country. There is too much sovereignty of mind — too much of the manhood of humanity amongst us to admit of it. It might do for a race of men whose anxieties never rise above their bodily wants—for men who can conceive of no other paradise than that of fire-proof buildings, surrounded with gardens and orchards, with meadows and woodlands beyond; but for Anglo-Saxon Americans, who from experience know the peculiar blessedness of their own firesides, and the high independence of their well-earned possessions—for the sovereign fathers, and sons, and wives, and daughters of our own New England, whose individuality of character, independence of thought, and power of invention, have become proverbial the world over, it will never do.

> O never may a son of thine,
> Where'er his wandering steps incline,

Forget the sky that bent above
His childhood like a dream of love.

No; associational labor, in its popular signification, must combine with other elements than the stern puritanical morality that New England furnishes. Its feeble organism could not long bear up against our chilling blasts, much less brave with our hardy sons the storms and billows of the ocean. We hardly believe that our seamen, who with unparalleled enterprise and heroism have braved the perils of the deep to secure the means of social and domestic enjoyment, will be content to merge their individuality of interest and family relationship in what is called "a community." We hardly believe that those who are conscientiously attached to their own religious views, will be persuaded to merge them by a compromise in the religious views of "a community," or to change them for a *philosophy* * upon which it is said this community must be based.

It cannot be. God has stamped upon man an individuality of being which it were scarcely less than sacrilege to violate. He has established the family relation as the basis of domestic and social order, and the earliest incipient tendencies towards its subversion should meet with the withering rebuke of every Christian man and Christian community.

The experience of six thousand years, during which the family relation has prevailed over the whole earth, and its divinity been acknowledged by almost every nation, kindred, tribe, and tongue, whether savage or civilized, pagan or Christian, will scarcely be exchanged for the wild speculations of a few theorizing, self-styled philanthropists.

Associational labor, based upon personal right of property, without aiming to break up our present social relations, might secure the ordinary advantages of combination; but anything beyond this is perfectly visionary. Individual

* Doubtless there must be a religion or philosophy at the bottom of all this.—*Horace Greeley, before the Mechanics' and Workingmen's Association, Stonington.*

enterprise, after all, if not in every case so immediately available, is still the most dignified and satisfactory. Nothing is better than that a man should rejoice in the work of his own hands. The fruit of our own toil and industry, awakens an interest which the fruits of another cannot. A garden cultivated with our own hands, possesses attractions for us which another's cannot possess.

The prejudice which in many communities and certain classes exists against labor, is the result of a false and superficial education. As if freedom from labor, a kind of genteel idleness, were the criterion of gentility and refinement! There are individuals, *calling themselves gentlemen*, who walk about with gloved hands, as if they feared the sun would soil their immaculate dignity, who think labor beneath them. But though such, in their own estimation at least, may be gentlemen, *they are not men;* for a man never regards himself above labor, above the use of the axe, the saw, the spade, the hoe. The most pitiable and contemptible specimen of humanity, is a person too lazy or too proud to work. *Such individuals are beneath contempt.* The lowest orders of day-laborers are worthy of more respect, as they certainly possess and exhibit more true dignity of character, and render themselves more useful to their race. But labor, physical labor, the cultivation of the soil, as well as of many of the more toilsome of the mechanic arts, is commended to us by the example of the wise and good in every age of the world.

Who was the prime minister of Egypt, at a period of unparalleled importance in its history? A young man whose early training had been among his father's flocks. Who was Israel's deliverer and lawgiver? A man who for forty years watched his flocks as they fed and reposed in the valleys around Sinai and Horeb. Who was George Washington—the father of his country, the glory of his race, and the hero of the world? A Virginia farmer? And what was Benjamin Franklin, the American philosopher and sage, but a practical printer? And who was William Carey, the apostle to India

—a man who was as familiar with the difficult dialects of the East as with the alphabet of his own mother tongue? A shoemaker and shoe-mender.*

Go into a village in Massachusetts, upon a spring or summer morning, before the sun has kissed the dew from the tender grass, and you will meet a man of rustic, farmer-like appearance, passing through the streets with the implements of husbandry upon his shoulder. That man is Moses Stuart —known over the world as the most diligent of American students, as the most critical of American scholars.

Go into one of our New England cities, and look into a garden. You will see there a robust, healthy-looking man, throwing up the soil with the spade. That man is Francis Wayland, known over the world as the author of the "Moral Science."

The example of Elihu Burrit need scarcely be referred to. Until within a few years, he was scarcely known beyond the precincts of his own town. Mr. Everett, in one of his orations, as illustrative of the reward of application, chanced to mention that there was in the town of Worcester, a man working ten hours every day at the forge, who had made himself acquainted with forty languages and dialects. The world of letters were astonished at the announcement, and demanded to see the man. So the mechanic, laying aside his leathern apron, and leaving his hammer upon the anvil, conscious of his strength, stepped from the forge to the forum. The world saw, heard, wondered, and acknowledged him— a man—a man of mind—of thought—of letters—and writing his name high up in the temple of science, entwined it with a wreath of Fame.

But he, in the spirit of true greatness, laid all this aside to find his proper dignity as a man—as a mechanic; and soon the redoubling strokes of his hammer, and the glowing heat

* After Dr. Carey arrived in India so poor and dependent was he, that he was obliged to resort to his trade for support, and put out his sign, "Shoes made and mended here."

of his fire, told that Elihu Burrit *was still a man;* and that if the man of science and letters could not be concealed beneath the mingled dust and sweat of the forge, neither should the *mechanic be lost* behind the laurels of literary preferment. Elihu Burrit has done much for the world; but if God spares his life—and long may he be spared—he is destined to do more than he has yet done. Would you know what he is doing? Read his *Christian Citizen*, and especially his *Advocate of Peace*. Modest, unassuming, and even retiring; yet free, familiar, and conversational, with a mind strong, deep, and full—if not rapid and impetuous, yet by its volume irresistible—he carries in himself at least a partial contradiction of his own favorite theory, "*fit non nascitur*," for he evidently was both born and made.

Gentlemen of this Association, you have assumed a standing in this community worthy of yourselves, and worthy too of that extended brotherhood of workingmen in this country, of which you form a part. Maintain, then, the position which you have taken as a "Mechanics' and Workingmen's Literary Association." Nor be contented with the name; but seek after truth, and gather up knowledge as your choicest treasure. Remember that the union of labor with literature, of sound learning and intelligence with industrial enterprise, whether in the field or mechanic shop, upon the land or sea, in the cabin or forecastle, is equally the hope of our country and the world. Let your moments of physical relaxation, instead of being squandered and lost, be devoted to the improvement of your minds; and your moments of release from mental application to the discipline and improvement of the body. Thus you will furnish to yourselves, at least, satisfactory evidence that the laws of physical and mental development are harmonious in their action and reciprocal in their influence, and that it requires both the power of labor and thought, the combined strength of body and mind, fully to answer the end of our being.

Let the page of inspiration guide you. Get wisdom, get

understanding. If thou seek her as for hid treasures, she will be found of thee; but if thou forsake her, she will cast thee off forever.

Be true to yourselves, your families, your country, your God. In your civil relations be independent and manly—the dupes of no party, the slaves of no policy. Suffer no man as a partisan to approach you. The man who solicits your votes for himself or party, is the very man who is unworthy of your confidence. Let your intelligence and known independence of character render you inaccessible to this most unworthy and worthless class of men.* You have only to read, think, know, and act for yourselves, and they will cease to trouble you.

In your spiritual relations, act for God, for truth, and for eternity. And above all things, "beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of this world, and not after Christ." In your domestic relations, act for your families and with your wives. Strive above all things to leave them the best of all heritages—an intelligent moral and religious character, protected in their civil rights by institutions of righteousness and truth.

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* "You cannot fathom your own minds. There is a well of thought that has no bottom. The more you draw from it, the more clear and fruitful will it be. If you neglect to think for yourself, you will never know what you are capable of. At first your thoughts will come out in lumps homely and shapeless; but no matter. Learn to think, and think for yourselves."

EXEGESIS.

1 PETER 3 : 19 and 4 : 6.

Read before the Ministers' Monday Club of Westerly, R. I., and also before the Baptist Ministerial Conference of Eastern Connecticut at New London, and by both bodies requested for publication.

These passages have held our attention so long, and elicited so much critical examination, that I confess to an extreme diffidence in attempting to give any additional light thereon, especially in opposition to views advocated by the ripest scholarship of this scholarly age, and so ably presented by the brethren who have preceded me. For I do not forget that the interpretation offered by brethren Oliphant and Mead is commended and supported by a galaxy of names, whose scholarship and piety command my highest admiration, and whose exegetical authority it might seem presumption to call in question.

Nevertheless, the gravity of the questions raised; the theory put forth of probation after death, and the preaching of the gospel to the dead, from a new interpretation of these passages, enforced by so much critical research and philological acumen, make it all the more needful and dutiful, that we should be true to our own convictions, even if we expose ourselves to the charge of a presumptuous temerity thereby. And let me say in passing, that I disclaim all pretensions to superior scholarship, or to ability in critical exegesis, save

such as an ordinary classical and theological culture may have given me.

Now, as we all know, there are three factors of great importance in scriptural interpretation, namely: The *historical*, the *grammatical*, and the *exegetical*.

In the historical, we deal with the times in which the author lived; its outlying and concurrent literature; its modes of thought and expression, and the peculiar linguistic idioms of the people and period.

In the grammatical, we search out roots and stems, analyze verbal composition to get the radical meaning; look closely at construction and syntax; study the value of particles and connectives; the modifying force of adjective and adverbial clauses; weigh the force of modes and tenses, and especially the constructive value of participles; and last, but not least, the definitive use and limiting power of the Greek article; all this, and much more that we have not time to notice, belongs to the grammatical department of scriptural interpretation.

In exegesis, we look into the context to find out what the writer is driving at; whether the passage to be explained belongs to the body of the discourse, or is simply illustrative; compare it with other passages from the same author, making him his own expositor; allowing him to define the meaning of the passage in hand, by his use of the same terms elsewhere, and especially from the drift and sweep of doctrine and exhortation to reach a definite and satisfactory interpretation. And we may add to these, the period in which the book or epistle was written; the writer himself, his nationality, his culture, his educational training, his presumptive habits of thought and expression; then the persons or people to whom the writer addresses himself, their intellectual and religious status; their civil state, their persecutions and sufferings and martyrdoms. Any attempt to explain a book of the New Testament, or indeed, any book of the Bible, without a due regard to the modifying influence

of these outlying and underlying forces must be very imperfect and liable to be utterly false and misleading.

Within these lines then, let us address ourselves to the study of these passages, with the single purpose of learning what they teach by a true historical, grammatical, and exegetical interpretation.

The writer is the Apostle Peter; the same to whom the Master said: "When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself and walkedst whither thou wouldest; but when thou shalt be old, another shall gird thee and lead thee whither thou wouldest not. This he spake, signifying by what death he should glorify God."

Peter was now an old man and about to put off his tabernacle of the flesh as the Lord had shown him. And so with martyrdom before him, he addresses this epistle of counsel and encouragement to the disciples scattered through the provinces of Asia Minor, that they might have in remembrance his words after his decease or "*exodon*," and so be prepared to follow him to the heathen tribunals for trial and condemnation, and thence to prison and martyrdom.

This is the ground tone of the epistle and the key to many of its peculiar words and phrases. What intensity of meaning is given to 1 Peter 1 : 7, "*dia puros*," *by fire*; 4 : 12, "*purosis*," *the burning, fiery trial*, when we bear in mind that those to whom these words were addressed interpreted them under the lurid flames of martyrdom! They knew what the "*trial by fire*" and what the *burning* or *fiery trial* meant. Peter reminds that this "*purosis*" was no strange thing. All over the Roman empire the fires of martyrdom were kindled, and the same sufferings were accomplished in their brethren as in them, and that they should rejoice that they were counted worthy to be partakers of Christ's sufferings, that when his glory should be revealed they might be glad with exceeding joy.

The best authorities fix the date of this epistle beween the years A. D. 64 and 68, synchronizing with the persecution of

Christians by sword and flame, over the whole face of the Roman empire, from the Mediterranean to the Tiber, and from the tribunals of the Herods in Jerusalem and Cæsarea, to the judgment seat of Cæsar at Rome.

The words "*logos*" and *apologia*" and "*krima and krithosi*," are not fully understood until we see their judicial signification. They are terms of Roman jurisprudence, and they bring us into the presence of the Roman tribunal, where the Christians are being tried and judged.

And so Peter writes: "Be always ready to give *apologian*, an answer, to every one that asketh a *logon*, reason, of the hope that is within you." It is a judicial examination to which these terms belong, and one has but to open Mosheim's history of the first three centuries to find this view abundantly confirmed. My apology for dwelling so long upon the historical aspect, is its great value in the work of a true interpretation, and what has been said is but an intimation of the wealth of historical illustration that lies unused to a great extent around every part of the word of God.

The great desideratum of biblical literature at the present time is an exhaustive historical exposition of the *holy writings*, both of the Old and New Testaments, especially of the latter.

Let us proceed now to a grammatical and exegetical examination of these passages, 1 Peter 3 : 18, 19, and 4 : 6, upon which modern scholarship has bestowed an amount of critical labor accorded to few other passages in the word of God; an indication of their great doctrinal value, and of the grave responsibility of finding a true interpretation. Let us be reverent and prayerful to know the mind of God therein.

The eighteenth verse is a word of encouragement to those who were suffering under false accusations, as "*kakapoioi*," evil-doers. Peter reminds them that even Christ suffered once for our sins, the just for the unjust, "*thanatotheis men sarki zoopoietheis de to pneumati*," "*put to death in the flesh, but quickened, made alive*, in the spirit." Now if, as claimed

by the advocates of preaching to the dead, and authorized by the New Version, Christ's *own spirit* was quickened, or made alive, then I submit that his spirit must have died. For evidently the phrases put to death, "*thanatotheis*," and made alive "*zoopoietheis*" are the antithetical words of the passage. That which was made alive, died. But as the death was physical, so the quickening must be and must mean the resurrection of Christ's body by the Spirit of God. It seems to me this is beyond a question.

1 Cor. 15 : 36 confirms this view, "Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not *zoopoietai*, *made alive*, except it die."

Also 1 Cor. 15 : 22, "As in Adam all died, so in Christ shall all be *zoopoiesontai*, made alive."

Also Rom. 8 : 11, "But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead, dwell in you, he also that raised up Christ from the dead, shall *zoopoiesai*, make alive your *mortal bodies* by his *Spirit* that dwelleth in you."

This passage affirms that Christ was raised from the dead by the Spirit of God, and so confirms the above interpreta- of 1 Peter 3 : 18, namely, that though Christ was put to death in the flesh, yet he was made alive or raised from the dead by the Spirit of God ; though "crucified in weakness, yet he liveth by the power of God" (2 Cor. 13 : 4).

Also John 5 : 21, "For as the Father raiseth up the dead and maketh them alive, so also the Son *maketh alive*, *zoopoiei*, whom he will." Other passages might be cited, but these are sufficient to justify the criticism made above, namely, that the phrase, "*zoopoietheis en to pneumati*," cannot be interpreted to mean that Christ was made alive in his spiritual nature, but that he was made alive from the *dead* by the Spirit of God. The antithesis is between a physical death and a physical resurrection. If this exegesis be true, and I do not see that any other is possible, then the passage needs no further explanation.

For the sake of brevity and clearness let us freely paraphrase ver. 19, 20 : "By this same Spirit which raised Christ

from the dead, he preached to the spirits in prison during their disobedience in the days of Noah, when the long-suffering of God waited *hapax, once for all*, while the ark was preparing," etc., etc. I submit that the time of their disobedience and of their being preached to are inseparably bound together by the laws of syntax and grammatical construction.

The adverbs, "*pote*," "*hote*," and *hapax*, "during" "when," and "once for all," limit their probational disobedience to the building of the ark and make final the waiting of the long-suffering of God in the days of Noah.

This probationary preaching was "*hapax*," once for all, and never to be repeated.

That this is the definite meaning of "*hapax*" will not, I think, be questioned after an examination of the passages in which the word is found. Heb. 6 : 4, It is impossible for those who were "*hapax*," "*once*," enlightened. Heb. 9 : 7, But into the second tabernacle went the high priest alone "*hapax*," "*once*," every year. Heb. 9 : 26, But now "*hapax*," "*once*," in the end of the world hath Christ appeared. Heb. 9 : 27, As it is appointed to men "*hapax*," "*once*," to die, so Christ was "*hapax*," "*once*," offered. Heb. 12 : 26, Yet "*hapax*," "*once*," more, I shake not the earth only, but also heaven. Jude 3, The faith "*hapax*," "*once*," *delivered* to the saints. 1 Peter 3 : 18, Christ suffered "*hapax*," "*once*," for our sins. Now I submit that this word "*hapax*," "*once*," and once for all, confirms the exegesis, that the probation of these disobedient spirits was limited to the preaching of Noah, and was "*once for all*," *never to be repeated.* If this be true, the case is closed and nothing further need be said. If God waited "*once for all*," with these disobedient spirits while the ark was preparing, then a second probation is an impossibility, and the assumed mission of Christ to hades is not only without support, but has not the apology of a pardonable mistake.

There is a line of criticism supporting the above, from the use of participles with a finite verb. The rule is "that par-

ticiples are in time relation with the finite verb with which they are in construction. As in the case in hand, Christ *preached* to the *disobedient* spirits, while the long-suffering of God waited once in the days of Noah. Confirmatory of this in 2 Peter 2 : 5, Noah is called a *kerux*, a preacher of righteousness to these very spirits. And we can but ask, Why should this perverse generation, the wickedest the world ever saw, so corrupt and abominable that God was constrained to say that it repented him that he had made man, above all others be made the subject of a second probation and of a special mission from Christ during the brief period between his death and resurrection? In Matt. 24 : 37, our Lord brings forward these antediluvian sinners and their doom as a warning to those of that generation who were ripening for a similar condemnation. Would he have done so just upon the verge of a mission of special grace to them? Only the most positive authority of the Scriptures can justify such an interpretation, much less its affirmation as an article of faith and of a new departure in our preaching, of a probation after death. In 2 Peter 2 : 5–9, it is said, He spared not the old world, but saved Noah a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly, and that he knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation and to reserve the just to the day of judgment to be punished. Has God changed his policy? We cannot so think, and we shall be constrained to wait other authority than that furnished by the liberal exegesis of this passage before we venture to preach the new evangel of a probation after death.

If now this view be correct and 1 Peter 3 : 19, and 1 Peter 4 : 6, are, as claimed, logically and grammatically connected, then the latter passage, 4 : 6, finds its explanation in 3 : 19, and nothing further need be said.

But inasmuch as 4 : 6 is claimed as *the proof text* for preaching to the dead, and as its construction is peculiar and somewhat obscure, I submit the following grammatical analysis :

By "the living and dead" in verse 5, is doubtless meant the whole race. "*Gar for*" connects verse 6 with verse 5. "*Eis touto*," "to this end or purpose." "*Evenggelisthe*," "was the gospel preached," is the aorist passive, indefinite past time. "*Kai*," "*and*," is intensive, and may be rendered also, indeed, even, or moreover. "*Hina*," that, in order that. "*Krithosi*," might be judged, aorist subjunctive, indefinite past time like *evenggelisthe* on which it depends. "*Kata anthropous sarki*," is an adverbial phrase limiting "*krithosi*." Judged according to men in the flesh, or judged manward, on the human side. "*Men* and *de*" are particles of antithesis. "*Men*" to be rendered indeed or truly, and "*de*" denoting antithesis, "but," "*contrariwise*." "*Zosi*," "*might live*," present subjunctive, but looking to the future. "*Kata Theon Pneumati*," according to God in the Spirit, an adverbial adjunct limiting *zosi*.

From this we gather the following paraphrase: Who shall give account to him who is ready or prepared to judge the living and the dead, *i. e.*, mankind. For to this end was the gospel also preached to the dead (while living in indefinite past time), that they might be judged (at the same indefinite past time), according to men in the flesh (*i. e.*, manward judged, tried, and condemned to suffer martyrdom), but live according to God in the Spirit; that is, although like Christ adjudged to die and put to death in the flesh, they should live Godward, through the Spirit, "planted in the likeness of his death," "raised in the likeness of his resurrection." "If we died in him, we shall also live in him."

Let us recapitulate and bring into one view the points claimed as established in this paper.

1. It is claimed that in 1 Peter 3 : 18, the Greek words *thanatotheis* and *zoopoietheis*, "put to death and made alive," are the antithetical members of the passage, and that as "*thanatotheis*" put to death, means a physical death, so "*zoopoietheis*" must mean made alive in the body, for if the spirit was made alive, then the spirit must have died.

2. I claim that *pneumasi*, "spirits," and *apeithesasi*, "disobedient," are in grammatical construction bound in time relation to the finite verb *ekereuen*, "he preached," to the disobedient spirits.

3. That the time of disobedience and preaching was limited to the long suffering of God in the days of Noah.

4. And that this long suffering was probational, "*hapax*" once for all, and ended when Noah entered the ark; and that the preaching ended when God said: "My Spirit shall no longer strive with man."

5. That "*zoopoietheis*," "made alive," is to be interpreted of a physical quickening, is confirmed by verse 21, where it is said we are saved by baptism, as it symbolizes not the quickening of Christ's spirit, but the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

6. Also by Rom. 8: 11, where it is positively affirmed, "that the Spirit of God raised Christ from the dead," and that in like manner this same Spirit shall quicken our mortal bodies.

7. Illustrative of the same point are 1 Tim. 3: 16, Justified in the spirit; Heb. 9: 14, Who through the eternal spirit offered himself; Rom. 1: 4, Declared to be the Son of God in power according to the spirit of holiness through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead; Eph. 1: 20, According to the inworking of the mighty power which he wrought in Jesus Christ, whom he raised from the dead.

Thus much for the first passage, 1 Peter 3: 18, 19.

And now of 1 Peter 4: 6, I claim:

1. That "*evenggelisthe*," the gospel was preached aorist passive, denotes completed action in indefinite past time, and cannot therefore be anchored to a few days between the death and resurrection of Christ, and that *krithosi*, "might be judged," aorist passive subjunctive, fixes the judging at the same time. Peter says the gospel was preached to the great army of martyrs whose faith and sufferings are chronicled in Heb. 11.

2. I claim that the Greek words *krinai*, *krima*, and *krithosi* are judicial terms, such as are found in Xenophon's "Memorabilia," where he describes the trials and condemnation of Socrates, and that they bring us into the presence of the Roman tribunal where Christians are tried and judged and sent to prison and martyrdom.

In the same sense that the gospel was preached beforehand to Abraham it was preached through the anti-Christian centuries, and with the same result of trial, imprisonment, confiscations, banishment, and death. "Ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake." Hence Peter's emphatic exhortation: "Forasmuch as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, "*hoplisasthe*," arm yourselves with the same mind." This truth underlies the whole gospel. It is the cross and the crown; the martyrs coming up out of great tribulation, having washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb, swelling the chorus of the new song, "Unto him who loved and gave himself for us and made us kings and priests unto God be riches and honor and dominion forever and ever."

Judged "*kata anthropous*" or manward and sentenced to prison and martyrdom. But "*kata Theon*" Godward, that they might live again and live forever through the resurrection power of the Spirit of God.

In a word, these passages are the epitomised history of Christ's writhing and suffering church. "*Kata anthropous sarki*," condemned, sent to prison, to the stake or to the lions, but "*Kata Theon Pneumati*," according to God's jurisprudence, though they suffer and die with and for the sake of Christ, they shall rise and live and reign with him and die no more. "*Hoplisasthe*," arm yourselves, says Peter, for suffering and martyrdom. And the voice of the risen and ascended and glorified Saviour is, "I am he that was dead but am alive again, and have the keys of death and hell. Be thou faithful unto death [martyrdom], and I will give thee a crown of life."

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